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The Impact of Ockham's "Nominalism"
on his Understanding of Human Nature
and the *Imago Dei* in Man, in Comparison
with Aquinas, Bonaventure and Scotus

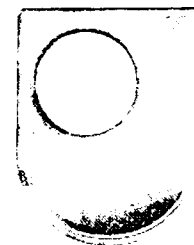
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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the consequences for understanding of human nature in theology and philosophy arising from the 'necessitarian crisis' of the 13th century. This was caused by official reaction to misappropriation of Aristotle by some philosophers and theologians, resulting in the Paris 'Condemnations' of 1270 and 1277. Flourishing before the crisis came to a head, Aquinas and Bonaventure made use of Aristotle's eudaemonism (happiness-oriented ethics) and natural finality to produce their own accounts of the teleological 'ordering' of human nature to its ultimate perfection and goal in God. Scotus and Ockham represent progressive stages in the subsequent eclipse and loss of the teleological perspective and natural finality, and its replacement by a more voluntarist, juridical and legalistic outlook, with consequences for the understanding of human nature.

An assessment is made of the impact of the resurgence of philosophical nominalism in the person of its principal 14th century exponent, William of Ockham. Each chapter charts the change in outlook from Aquinas to Ockham, under the respective headings of 'nature', 'freedom', 'grace' and the *imago Dei*. The focus is particularly on the effects of Ockham's logic and semantics on his own account of these realities.

The research provides evidence that Scotus and, especially, Ockham can be seen as contributors to the devaluation of nature. It is suggested that there is in Ockham's accounts of nature, grace and freedom a diminution of the sense of 'receptivity' to the divine which would mark the disposition of a soul being sanctified. It is shown that this receptivity has its source in the Trinitarian relations, where being is both given and received. In spite of his nominalist account of the category of 'relation', Ockham's portrayal of the *imago Dei* accurately reflects the intra-divine relations.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to Professor Alan McClelland, Dean of Graduate Research at Maryvale, and to his successor, Dr. Petroc Willey, for their very kind help and encouragement, and to the Maryvale staff for their help and hospitality. Special thanks are due to my Director of Studies, Professor David Luscombe, and to my Supervisor, Rev. Dr. Richard Conrad, OP for their wise guidance, which has rescued me more than once from academic 'gaucheries'. Thanks also to the Dominicans of Blackfriars, Oxford for the use of their library. Most of all, thanks are due to my wife, Helen, without whom – nothing (*sine qua non*).

ABBREVIATIONS

- CUP Cambridge University Press
- Leo. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Opera Omnia*, Rome, Leonine Edition.
- OUP Oxford University Press.
- PG *Patrologia Graeca*, Paris, Migne Edition of the Greek Fathers.
- PIMS Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto.
- PL *Patrologia Latina*, Paris, Migne Edition of the Latin Fathers.
- Philos. William of Ockham, *Opera Philosophica*, Franciscan Institute, N.Y.
- Quar. St. Bonaventure, *Opera Theologica*, Florence, Quaracchi.
- SCG St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*.
- Sent. Aquinas, Bonaventure and Ockham, Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, with Book number, I to IV.
- SL William of Ockham, *Summa Logicae*.
- ST St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*.
- Theol. William of Ockham, *Opera Theologica*, Franciscan Institute, N.Y.
- Vat. John Duns Scotus, *Opera Omnia*, Vatican Edition.

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Introduction and Select Literature Survey

The inspiration for this research came, in the first place, from reading Henri de Lubac's *Surnaturel* (1946) in its revised and updated two-volume edition and translation,¹ and Servais Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics* (1985).² Both are concerned with the eclipse, over a long period of time (15th to 20th centuries), of understanding of 'natural finality' in human nature, as it is found in St. Thomas Aquinas, and, with different emphasis, in St. Bonaventure. There seemed to be surprisingly little academic follow-up to the claims made by de Lubac and Pinckaers, despite general agreement that a significant change in understanding of human nature had come about in the 14th century. This research has aimed to elucidate something of the "how and why" of this change in understanding, in terms of natural finality, the "lost dimension" of human nature, by examining the relevant aspects of the works of Aquinas, Bonaventure, Scotus and, especially, Ockham, who seems to have made the greatest single contribution to the change. I have also given, in chapter 1, a short account of the 1277 'Paris Condemnations', the historical event which provided the original impetus for the change.

I have made a number of observations which seem to me valid, though I would not claim originality for them. I have called Ockham's metaphysics a "metaphysics of separation and isolation", because of its very evident 'singularising' purpose. By the same token, Ockham's 'razor' seems to me to be aimed as much at the intelligible connections between things as at their claimed

¹ Henri de Lubac, SJ, *The Mystery of the Supernatural*, and *Augustinianism and Modern Theology*, NY, Crossroad Herder, 1998 and 2000.

² Servais Pinckaers, OP, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, Sr.M.T.Noble trans., Edinburgh, T&T.Clark, 1995.

superfluous number. What seems to me an important example is his account of the “divine ideas” (p.73), as it concerns the divine essence and the sphere in which the universal has to be acknowledged as real. Ockham, not unexpectedly, makes a clean break with it.

He also makes a clean break with the concept of freedom as generally held before his time, and which Pinckaers calls “freedom for excellence”, as opposed to Ockham’s “freedom of indifference”. The latter was revolutionary at the time for placing a choice of good and a choice of evil on an identical footing vis-à-vis freedom. From being a “principle of human perfectibility”, as explained in chapter 2, freedom becomes univocally a “principle of accountability or responsibility”, in an increasingly juridical or forensic frame of moral reference. The understanding of grace as “gift of divine intimacy” is correspondingly weakened (chapter 3).

As far as breaking “new” academic ground is concerned, I have not found elsewhere, with the exception of Henninger on ‘Relation’, a direct comparison in one volume between the four scholars treated here, on the issues dealt with. I would lay claim to originality only in the treatment of ‘Ockham on the *Imago Dei*’ in chapter 4. There, I establish the orthodoxy of his conclusion, despite the fact that his account of the soul’s faculties (p.244) seems to point to a Sabellian or Modalist (unitarian), as opposed to Trinitarian, *imago* in man. He successfully avoids this outcome.

Lastly, I draw attention by occasional emphasis or comment throughout the text to a theological and anthropological theme which Ockham does not treat

himself, but which seems to me to represent a consistent deficiency in his concerns and outlook. This is the theme of 'receptivity' in divine-human relations, which I base in the first place on the 'passive relations of origin' in the intra-divine life of the Trinity, in which being is both given and received. I devote some space to this issue in the conclusion, as I consider it important; however, this is an area requiring further research. The same applies to the claim I make in chapter 3, that Scotus's banishment of direct unmediated 'divine illumination' on the natural level represents the start of a 'paradigm shift' from a perspective based on the metaphor of 'sight' to a perspective based on the metaphor of 'hearing' (p.192).

SELECT LITERATURE SURVEY

Aquinas and Bonaventure are well served in terms of English translations, with the notable exceptions of their commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard. The latter applies also to Scotus and Ockham, despite the fact that their commentaries comprise a high proportion of their extant works. Scotus's and Ockham's Quodlibets are readily available in translation, though not Aquinas's (Bonaventure seems not to have produced any). Aquinas's commentaries on Aristotle are now appearing in translation in the very useful 'Dumb Ox' series, which include Aristotle's texts. Most of Ockham's *Summa Logicae* can now be found in translation, including Books I and II. The *Cambridge Translations of Medieval Philosophical Texts* now appearing are helping to fill a very large gap. See the Bibliography below (p.289) under Primary Sources.

Of secondary sources, Aquinas, Scotus and Ockham in the *Cambridge Companion* series contain very useful essays on all aspects of the philosophy of each. The *Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy* (2010) and of *Later Medieval Philosophy* (1982) likewise contain a comprehensive range of articles. On Aquinas's ontology of being and essence, Maritain's *Existence and the Existent*, and J.Wippel, chapter 19 in the *Cambridge History*, 1982 are good introductions. The best recent article I have found on the subject is James Lehrberger (1998), who points out that "the definition of man as 'rational animal' takes no account of the riches discovered by the 'esse-essentia' analysis of the human soul"; also Eberl (2004). On Aquinas's analogy of being, apart from his own clear exposition in *ST.Ia.13.5*, there is Lee (1994), one of very few recent treatments of the subject. On Scotus's and Ockham's univocal concept of being, Langston (1979) and Dumont (1987) are recommended, and Amerini (2005) on the reception of Ockham's ontology in Italy in the 1330s, which describes what must have been the concerns of many at the time regarding the dismissal of any and all reality from universals. Leff (1975) is a very abundant source of primary references on every aspect of Ockham.

On the always-contentious subject of the relationship between intellect and will regarding freedom in human beings, a good recent overview is Hoffmann's chapter 30 in the 2010 *Cambridge History*. Hoffmann (1999) is a goldmine of references on the same subject; I also recommend Ingham (2002) on Scotus's 'advancing' voluntarism. Williams (1998 both) is an example of a modern scholar who interprets Scotus as an 'extreme' voluntarist. A more moderate view is found in the introduction to Wolter (1986). For accounts of Aquinas on freedom, see e.g. MacDonald and Stump, pp.98-100 below. On Scotus on

freedom, Incandela (1992) can be recommended. Frank (1992) gives Scotus's account of the working of divine concurrence. Clark (1978) is a useful exposition of Ockham's basic positions on freedom and the will. Gaine (2003) is an excellent introduction to the subject in general.

In connection with the 20th century controversy over human finality which I describe in chapter 1 (pp.28-31), there is also the recent article by Thomas Osborne (2008). On finality in general, material is scarcer, but de Lubac (1998 and 2000) and Pinckaers (1995) are really essential reading. Celano (1986) provides a useful background to the subject. Aertsen (1988), chapter 8, is essential reading for Thomas on finality, also Ingham (1990) for Scotus, and for Ockham on finality – a very sparsely covered subject – there is Klocker (1966), and Marilyn Adams (1998) is important on Ockham's perspective and the "shift to the willing subject". Adams's 2-volume "William Ockham" (1989) is an authoritative source on every aspect of Ockham's philosophy, but does not cover his morality and ethics. She helps to fill this 'lacuna' in chapter 11 of the *Cambridge Companion* (Spade ed., 1999). On Thomas's 'connaturality', an important subject regarding finality, Tallon (1984) is useful, also Pinckaers (1995), and in Suto (2004) a Japanese scholar is calling the attention of Christians to the long-neglected subject of connatural knowledge in Aquinas.

On the important subject of divine illumination (chapter 3, pp.150-156), Timothy Noone writes a chapter (27) in the new (2010) *Cambridge History*; also Carpenter (1999), chapters 3 and 4, is an excellent source for Bonaventure on illumination; and for Scotus, Robert Pasnau in the *Cambridge Companion* (Williams ed., 2003), pp.300-304. On morality and virtue, Torchia (2002) draws

attention to the necessity of recovering “the vitality inherent in Aquinas’s interpretation of virtue and its bearing on what it means to be fully human”. Ingham (1996) writes on Scotus’s moral doctrine as representing the *via pulchritudinis* (way of beauty). Hare (2000) and Cross (1997) are illustrative of some of the ways Scotus comes up in contemporary moral debate. Cross (1999) gives wide coverage of Scotus in the *Great Medieval Thinkers* series. For Ockham on moral issues, see Rega Wood (primary sources 1997), and Clark (1971 and 1973). Also Goddu (1996) describes the shift in moral perspective under Scotus and Ockham from evil as privation of good to evil as failure in obligation, and Osborne (2007) the increasing separation of interior and exterior acts in moral evaluation from Scotus to Ockham. Freppert (1988) gives a wider overview.

I recommend Mary Anne Pernoud’s two articles (1970 and 1972) on Ockham’s strategic use of the *potentia absoluta Dei* in pursuit of his metaphysical goals. For a wide range of basic articles on Ockham’s logic, semantics and metaphysics, Boehner (1958) was considered ground-breaking in its time and is still very useful. Much more recent and including Ockham’s theology and anthropology is Maurer (1999). Baudry (1958 in French) is still the only Ockham lexicon, and covers philosophy only. On Scotus’s pioneering use of ‘intuitive’ as distinct from ‘abstractive’ cognition, see Dumont (1989) and Wolter and Adams (1993). There is an abundance of literature on Ockham’s logic and semantics: in addition to the *Cambridge Companion*, see Spade (1975) and Boler (1985) on absolute and connotative terms, Rayman (2005) on natural signification and Lenz (2008) on his theory of mental language. On Ockham’s use of the ‘razor’, see Maurer (1984 and 1996). On his doctrine of

universals, see Adams, chapter 20 in the *Cambridge History* (1982), Matteo (1985) and Panaccio (2004) as well as the *Cambridge Companion*. On the subjects of the 1277 Condemnations (chapter 1), Ockham's referral to the papal court at Avignon (chapter 3), and the issues of 'relation' and the *imago Dei* (chapter 4), see the references in the text.

Chapter One.

Human Nature as Principle of Finality Ordered to the Highest Good of the Person

Introduction

The concept of the 'ordering' or 'ordination' of a nature, as found in individuals, to its own highest good or ultimate perfection is one of the fruits of Aristotle's painstaking observations of what happens in the natural world. Thomas not only perceived the validity of the observation in itself, but also its implications for a more profound appreciation and explanation of the working of divine providence in creation. In the course of this chapter I will say something briefly about the rediscovery and re-appropriation of Aristotle in the West in the 12th and 13th centuries, and of its impact and repercussions in the philosophy and theology of the Schools. The main purpose of the chapter, however, is to give an account of the change in understanding of 'natural finality', from Aquinas to Ockham, from an ontological concept, grounded in the nature of human 'being' as creation and gift of divine providence, to a voluntarist concept based entirely in the individual's free choice to love and serve God, or not.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS (1225-1274)

Modes of Being: God and Creatures

Aquinas's account of human nature, and indeed of all nature, has its source and point of origin in the material contained in his treatise on God, found in its final and definitive form at the beginning of the *Summa Theologiae*. It is drawn in the first place from the revelation to Moses, in Exodus 3:14, of the divine name: "I Am Who Am". In Thomas's view, 'finality' or teleological ordering of a nature –

that is, of every created nature – to an end or goal representing its ultimate perfection and fulfilment, has its source here, in what is revealed of the divine nature; so much so that he uses it as the main element in the first of his five ‘ways’ of proving the existence of God, drawing on Aristotle’s proof for an Unmoved First Mover:³

Now whatever is in motion is put in motion by another, for nothing can be in motion except it is in potentiality to that towards which it is in motion; whereas a thing moves inasmuch as it is in act. For motion is nothing else than the reduction of something from potentiality to actuality.⁴ But nothing can be reduced from potentiality to actuality, except by something in a state of actuality...Therefore whatever is in motion must be put in motion by another...Therefore it is necessary to arrive at a first mover, put in motion by no other; and this everyone understands to be God.⁵

In the following question in the *Summa*, on divine simplicity, Thomas goes on to show that in God, who is uncaused, and simple (non-composite) in his being, essence and existence are identical: God is his essence, and is his existence. Here, Aristotle’s distinction between matter and form (hylomorphism), applied to creatures, serves to illustrate one of the differences in mode of being between Creator and creatures, in this case material, sensible creatures, which are composites. In addition to the non-composite/composite difference:

..in things composed of matter and form, the nature or essence must differ from the *suppositum*, because the essence or nature connotes (*comprehendit*) only what is included in the definition of the species; as humanity connotes all that is included in the definition of man, for it is by this that man is man, and it is this that humanity signifies, that, namely, whereby man is man. Now individual matter, with all the individualizing accidents, is not included in the definition of the species...Therefore this flesh, these bones, and the accidental qualities distinguishing this particular matter, are not included in humanity; and yet they are included in the thing which is a man. Hence the thing which is a man has something more in it than has humanity.⁶

Hence, the individual existent, the “thing which is a man”, with all his uniquely individual accidents, making up “the form of the whole” (i.e. the whole man), is

³ Aristotle, *Physics*, VIII, 4.

⁴ See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IX, 1 on actuality and potentiality (act and potency).

⁵ Aquinas, *ST*.Ia.2.3c,(Leo.IV,31). All Aquinas *ST* quotes are from the Dominican 1920 translation: see Bibliography,p.287.

⁶ Aquinas, *ST*.Ia.3.3c,(Leo.IV,39-40); cf.*SCG*.I.21.2,(Leo.XIII,63-4).

distinct from the essence or nature, signified by 'humanity', the "form of the part", signifying only what is common to all men.⁷ None of this can apply to God: "Since God then is not composed of matter and form,⁸ He must be his own Godhead, his own Life, and whatever else is predicated of Him".⁹ But as God is the "first efficient cause", his existence cannot differ from his essence. Therefore, "God is his own existence, and not merely his own essence".¹⁰ For Thomas, composition in a created thing results primarily from the fact that its essence is not the same as its existence, in which case something superadded to its essence must necessarily be found in it. But God's essence is simple, containing no composition; therefore, "God is the same as his essence or nature".¹¹

In proving this of God, Thomas also clarifies the situation of all creatures, in whom essence and existence are distinct:

Existence is that which makes every form or nature actual...Therefore, *existence must be compared to essence, if the latter is a distinct reality, as actuality to potentiality.* Therefore, since in God there is no potentiality...it follows that in him essence does not differ from existence. Therefore his essence is his existence.¹²

Consequently, the esse of creatures relates to the divine esse as a participation: "...just as that which has fire, but is not fire, is on fire by participation; so that which has existence but is not existence, is a being by participation".¹³ Likewise, what participates cannot be its own cause:

Now it is impossible for a thing's existence to be caused by its essential constituent principles, for nothing can be the sufficient cause of its own existence, if its existence is caused. Therefore that thing, whose existence

⁷ Aquinas, *De Ente*, II.9, (Leo.XLIII,373), Maurer trans.,41.

⁸ See Aquinas, *ST.Ia.3.2c*, (Leo.IV,37).

⁹ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.3.3c*, (Leo.IV,39-40).

¹⁰ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.3.4c*, (Leo.IV,42).

¹¹ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.3.3c*, (Leo.IV,39).

¹² Aquinas, *ST.Ia.3.4c*, (Leo.IV,42).

¹³ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.3.4c*, (Leo.IV,42).

differs from its essence, must have its existence caused by another. But this cannot be true of God; because we call God the first efficient cause [from the second of Thomas's five 'proofs'¹⁴]. Therefore it is impossible that in God his existence should differ from his essence.¹⁵

Therefore, in creatures, essence and existence are distinct, and *essence is in potentiality to existence*. Hence, natural finality marks the being of all creatures.

This includes immaterial creatures (angels), even though they are not composed of matter and form. In SCG.II.54, Thomas explains that the composition of substance [or essence] and being is not the same as the composition of matter and form, "although both are compositions of potentiality and act".¹⁶ Angelic being differs from divine being because, as with material beings, the essence or nature of angels is distinct from, and therefore in potentiality to, their existence. Therefore we can deduce that angelic nature possesses finality, like human nature, even if its sphere of operation is outside time. Neither is the power of operation, i.e. the faculties, the same as its essence in any creature.¹⁷ For this last point, he cites Pseudo-Dionysius¹⁸ in support, but it will provide a significant point of disagreement with Thomas for both Scotus and Ockham.¹⁹

Aquinas: Being and Essence

Thomas's account of natural finality is closely bound up with his account of being. In the order of apprehension, Thomas says, being is what first enters the intellect and "falls under the apprehension simply".²⁰ However, the primary datum of the intellect from the point of view of intelligibility is essence. This is

¹⁴ Aquinas, ST.Ia.2.3c,(Leo.IV,31-2).

¹⁵ Aquinas, ST.Ia.3.4c,(Leo.IV,42); cf.SCG.I.21,(Leo.XIII,63-4).

¹⁶ Aquinas, SCG.II.54.1,(Leo.XIII,392), Anderson trans.,156.

¹⁷ Aquinas, ST.Ia.54.3c,(Leo.V,47).

¹⁸ Pseudo-Dionysius, *Celestial Hierarchy*,XI,(PG.3,286).

¹⁹ Scotus, pp.56-7 below; Ockham, p.82 below.

²⁰ Aquinas, ST.I-II.94.2c,(Leo.VII,169).

being insofar as it is adapted to enter the mind, or is capable of being apprehended by the intellect. Intelligibility, as such, is co-extensive with that which is or can be, and therefore infinitely exceeds what the human intellect is capable of apprehending. God, in fact, is pure, infinite intelligibility. However, every idea (or similitude or concept) brings something immediately before the mind. This is an essence or a nature, in the wide sense, which includes everything except privations, such as blindness or nothingness. Privations have no essence,²¹ as they signify only the absence of what should be there. Essence, however, can be something with real existence, or something only in the mind:

Now every essence or quiddity can be understood without knowing anything about its being. I can know, for instance, what a man or a phoenix is and still be ignorant whether it has being in reality. From this it is clear that being is other than essence or quiddity, unless perhaps there is a reality whose quiddity is its being.²²

Being, therefore, has two senses: a) *entitas* or *esse*, this is the *act* of being (*actus essendi*) or existence (*existentia*), and b) *ens*, that is, the thing itself which exists; this is essence in the wide sense: that which *possesses esse*. Essence in the strict sense is *what* a thing is, not the thing itself.

According to Thomas, essence is the same as nature or quiddity, but *conceived as a potentiality to being*: “I call essence that whose actuality is being”.²³ He also says in the *De Ente* that

Because the definition (*ratio*) telling what a thing is signifies that by which a thing is located in its genus or species, philosophers have substituted the term 'quiddity' for the term 'essence'. The Philosopher frequently calls this 'what something was to be' (*quod quid erat esse*), that is to say, that which makes a thing to be what it is...The term 'quiddity' is derived from what is

²¹ Aquinas, *De Ente et Essentia*, I.3, (Leo.XLIII,369), Armand Maurer trans., Toronto, P.I.M.S., 1968, 30.

²² Aquinas, *De Ente*, IV.6, (Leo.XLIII,376), Maurer, 55.

²³ Aquinas, *Sent.* I.d.23.q.1a.1, (Mandonnet, I, 555).

signified by the definition, while 'essence' is used because through it, and in it, that which is has being.²⁴

Genus, species and difference are the categories or classes of universal being in creatures. The fact that they each, though in different ways, signify the whole enables them to be classified as universals. The ability to be categorized in terms of genus and species requires that a thing's essence be (at least notionally or conceptually) distinct from its being or existence. For this reason God cannot be placed in a genus, because, "...to the divine being nothing can be added that determines it in an essential way, as the difference determines the genus".²⁵ Misinterpretation, by Amaury of Bène (d.c.1207) and his followers, of a text of Pseudo-Dionysius which states that "The being of all things is the super-essential divinity"²⁶ had led to the claim that God is the formal being, or formal cause, of all things,²⁷ in other words, that God is universal being, or common being (*esse commune*). Thomas comments:

If we say that God is pure being (*esse tantum*), we need not fall into the mistake of those who held that God is that universal being by which everything formally exists. The being that is God is such that no addition can be made to it. Because of its purity, therefore, it is being distinct from all other being...But even though the notion of universal being does not include any addition, it implies no prescinding from an addition.²⁸

However, while not the universal being of all things (pantheism), God is their universal cause.²⁹

²⁴ Aquinas, *De Ente*, I.4, (Leo.XLIII, 369), Maurer, 31-32.

²⁵ Aquinas, *SCG* I.24; cf. I.25, (Leo.XIII, 74, 76-7); *De Ente*, V.1, (Leo.XLIII, 377), Maurer, 60.

²⁶ Ps.-Dionysius, *De Caelesti Hierarchia*, IV.1, (PG.3, 178).

²⁷ Aquinas refers to this in *SCG*.I.26.10, (Leo.XIII, 81-2).

²⁸ Aquinas, *De Ente*, V.2, (Leo.XLIII, 378), Maurer, 60-61.

²⁹ Aquinas, *SCG*.II.15, (Leo.XIII, 295).

Aquinas: Being and Substance

With Aristotle, the idea of potency (potentiality) is exclusively bound up with materiality. Therefore, everything immaterial is pure act, i.e. a god. From a Christian standpoint, as already noted, a creature that is immaterial is not yet a pure act: it is in potency with respect to its own existence. Thomas, therefore, expands the notion of potentiality by extending it to existence itself: "I call essence that whose actuality is being".³⁰ Regarding the relationship between the terms 'nature' and 'essence', he says,

The term 'nature'...seems to mean the essence of a thing as directed to its specific operation, for no reality lacks its specific operation...The term 'essence' [from *esse*] is used because through it, and in it, that which is has being.³¹

The essence does not confer being on a substance, but is that *through* which, or by means of which, being (*esse*) is conferred. The *esse* of a thing is its supreme perfection, "the actuality of all acts, and therefore the perfection of all perfections".³² Therefore, inasmuch as a thing is in actuality in accordance with its own essence or nature, so it is in actuality toward its own perfection. That which seeks its own perfection seeks the fullness of being, which is found only in God, who is Being itself,³³ and therefore moves closer to God in likeness:

All things, by desiring their own perfection, desire God Himself, inasmuch as the perfections of all things are so many similitudes of the divine being.

As "a thing is perfect in proportion to its state of actuality",³⁴ so, in moving closer to God, who is pure actuality, it moves closer to its perfection, the fullness of its being.

³⁰ Aquinas, *Sent. I, d. 23. 1. 1*, (Mandonnet, I, 555).

³¹ Aquinas, *De Ente*, I. 4, (Leo. XLIII, 370), Maurer. 32, my parenthesis.

³² Aquinas, *De Potentia*, VII. 2. ad. 9, St. Thomas Aquinas, *On The Power Of God*, Vol. 3, Dominican Fathers trans., London, Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1934, 12.

³³ Aquinas, Cf. *ST. Ia. 3. 3-4*, (Leo. IV, 39-43).

³⁴ Aquinas, *ST. Ia. 4. 1c*, (Leo. IV, 50).

Aquinas: The Analogy of Being

The difference in mode of being as between God and creatures comes into play in the matter of predication. Because God *is* his being and *is* his attributes, whereas creatures *have* their being and their attributes, it might be thought that “whatever is said of God and of creatures is predicated equivocally”, that is, “under the same name but not in the same sense”,³⁵ even if the infinite distance between God and creatures suggests that no such statement, being equivocal, can truly convey anything at all in God accessible to human understanding. However, as Thomas points out, this contradicts the words of St. Paul: “The invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made” (Rom.1:20). Therefore, things “are said of God and creatures in an analogous sense, that is, according to proportion”. Being, for instance, is predicated of God and creatures not equivocally, but analogically. “Thus, whatever is said of God and creatures, is said according to the relation of a creature to God as its principle and cause, wherein all perfections of things pre-exist excellently”.³⁶ Therefore, perfections such as being and goodness are possessed by creatures in a different mode from their presence in God.

Thomas is entirely clear, on the other hand, that “Univocal predication is impossible between God and creatures”, because of the different mode of being:

Thus when any term expressing perfection is applied to a creature, it signifies that perfection distinct in idea from other perfections; as, for instance, by this term ‘wise’ applied to a man, we signify some perfection distinct from a man’s essence, and distinct from his power and existence,

³⁵ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.13.5sc*,(Leo.IV,146).

³⁶ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.13.5c*,(Leo.IV,146-7).

and from all similar things; whereas when we apply it to God, we do not mean to signify anything distinct from his essence, or power, or existence.³⁷

Likewise, perfections exist in creatures “divided and multiplied”, whereas they “pre-exist in God unitedly”; in addition, they “circumscribe and comprehend” the creature of whom they are predicated, whereas they can only be applied to God “as incomprehended, and as exceeding the signification of the name...Hence no name is predicated univocally of God and creatures”.³⁸ The Franciscan school would later contradict this, by the simple expedient of denying that being and essence are distinct in creatures, and consequently adopting univocal predication.

New Light on an Old Distinction

The enduring significance of Thomas's being/essence distinction has been highlighted in recent times by Hans Urs von Balthasar, in a chapter entitled *Existence and Essence* in his book on contemplative prayer. I include some of his comments here for reasons which will become clear later:

Creaturely being is constituted by the tension between existence and essence. It is an unfathomable mystery which man shares with all creatures, but in him it also goes right through his spiritual being and thus informs all his spiritual acts.³⁹

He speaks of the “spiritual eye”⁴⁰ contemplating the beloved (human or divine) “wandering restlessly between the two poles [of existence and essence], each of which seeks the other and explains itself by reference to the other”.⁴¹ The significance of this is clear, because the divine “I AM” of Exodus 3:14 has re-appeared in the Gospels: “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58). The

³⁷ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.13.5c*, (*Leo.IV*, 146).

³⁸ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.13.5c*, (*Leo.IV*, 146).

³⁹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Prayer*, San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 1986, p.245. German original, *Das Betrachtende Gebet*, Einsiedeln, Switzerland, Johannes Verlag, 1955.

⁴⁰ Cf. Augustine's and Thomas's 'eye of the mind' and 'intelligible light', below pp.150,152-3.

⁴¹ Von Balthasar, *Prayer*, 246, my parenthesis.

“essence” of the Law and the Prophets, and of the salvation-history of Israel, has found its completion and perfection, and the fullness of its being, in the divine “I AM” of the New Testament:

In the very midst of the raising of Lazarus Martha is carried beyond her “essential” contemplation on the subject of the resurrection on the Last Day, to the existential recognition of Jesus as “the resurrection and the life” (“I am...Do you believe this?”) (John 11: 23-26).⁴²

The “tension between existence and essence” is ultimately resolved by the Incarnation, by which a nature in which they are distinct is united to a nature in which they are identical.

Aquinas: The Hierarchy of Being

In a question asking whether the divine will itself is subject to any causality, Thomas also describes God’s intention to create as “His inclination to put in act what his intellect has conceived”.⁴³ The Why? of creation is ultimately a mystery, but we can say that “since the will follows from the intellect, there is a cause of the will in the person that wills”.⁴⁴ God’s willing of things external to Himself proceeds (though without necessity) from his necessary willing of Himself, his being and his goodness, which are all one in Him: “God wills his own being and his own goodness as his principal object, which is for Him the reason for willing other things”.⁴⁵ Consequently, by analogy in creatures:

...natural things have a natural inclination not only towards their own proper good, to acquire it if not possessed, and, if possessed, to rest therein; but also to spread abroad their own good amongst others, so far as possible. Hence we see that every agent, insofar as it is perfect and in act, produces its like. It pertains, therefore, to the nature of the will to communicate as far as possible to others the good possessed; and especially does this pertain to the divine will, from which all perfection is derived in some kind of likeness...Thus...He wills both Himself to be, and other things to be, but

⁴² Von Balthasar, *Prayer*, 254, parenthesis in original.

⁴³ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.19.4c*, (*Leo.IV,237*).

⁴⁴ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.19.5c*, (*Leo.IV,239*).

⁴⁵ Aquinas, *SCG.I.80.2*, (*Leo.XIII,223*), Pegis trans., 255.

Himself as the end, and other things as ordained to that end; inasmuch as it befits the divine goodness that other things should be partakers therein.⁴⁶

A principle of central importance to Thomas's account of natural finality, and indeed his whole system, appears here: *bonum est diffusivum et communicativum sui esse*.⁴⁷ Good, by its very nature, has an inclination or tendency to spread and communicate itself to others. In God, this is not because of any need, because in Himself He lacks no perfection, and neither the act of creation, nor its absence, can add anything to, or subtract anything from, his being. Rather, the creative act expresses the superabundance of an infinite Being whose perfection and love overflow.

Thomas shows that God could not have created another infinite like Himself, as two infinities cannot co-exist.⁴⁸ Only finites can co-exist with or in the infinite, and "finite" denotes determination to a final end or goal. God is therefore the final (not formal) cause, as well as the efficient cause, of all things. As their source or principle, He is also their end or goal. Creatures image the Creator in desiring to disseminate their own being and goodness, and are creators-by-analogy: they participate in divine causality as secondary causes, each to the measure of its own capacity, in what resembles a hierarchy of causes.⁴⁹ As Fergus Kerr points out: "Indeed this is how creatures generally attain the divine likeness – by *causing*".⁵⁰ In Thomas's words:

Now, things tend to the likeness of God in the same way that effects tend to the likeness of the agent...Therefore, things naturally tend to become like God by the fact that they are the causes of others.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Aquinas, *ST*.Ia.19.2c,(*Leo*.IV,233).

⁴⁷ Aquinas, *SCG*.I.37.5,(*Leo*.XIII,111), Pegis,152.

⁴⁸ Aquinas, *ST*.Ia.7.2c,(*Leo*.IV,74).

⁴⁹ Aquinas, *ST*.Ia.19.2c,(*Leo*.IV,233).

⁵⁰ Fergus Kerr, *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2002,143.

⁵¹ Aquinas, *SCG*.III.21.5,(*Leo*.XIV,50-51); Bourke,pt.1,82; cf.*ibid.*,III.20,(*Leo*.XIV,46-7).

However, this assimilation to divine likeness is not possible for human agency alone. This brings us to an issue which Kerr describes as

the problem central in all Western theology: the problem of the co-operation between the graceful God and the graced creature...Whether co-operation is necessarily competition...takes us right to the heart of Thomas's theology. He often quotes Isaiah 26:12: 'Lord, you have wrought all our works in us', which he takes⁵² precisely as *excluding* all competitiveness between divine and human agency...He sees it as the mark of God's freedom, and ours, that God 'causes' everything in such a way that the creature 'causes' it too.⁵³

Thomas himself refers to the difficulty some people have with a graced co-operation between God and creature which in no way detracts from either divine power and freedom or human freedom.⁵⁴ Neither is it a shared effort in the sense of two creatures sharing a task:

It is also apparent that the same effect is not attributed to a natural cause and to divine power in such a way that it is partly done by God, and partly by the natural agent; rather it is wholly done by both, according to a different way, just as the same effect is wholly attributed to the instrument and also wholly to the principal agent.⁵⁵

The issue of divine and human freedom will be taken further in Chapter 2, and that of *gratia co-operans* in Chapter 3.

A complement to the 'hierarchy of causes' is found in the *Contra Gentiles*, in what might be described as a 'hierarchy of ends'. All proximate ends are ordered to one ultimate end:

Order among ends is a consequence of order among agents, for, just as the supreme agent moves all secondary agents, so must all the ends of secondary agents be ordered to the end of the supreme agent, since whatever the supreme agent does, He does for the sake of his end. Now the supreme agent does the actions of all inferior agents by moving them all to their actions and, consequently, to their ends. Hence, it follows that all the ends of secondary agents are ordered by the first agent to his own

⁵² E.g. in *ST.Ia.105.5*, (*Leo.V,475*).

⁵³ Kerr, *After Aquinas*, 142-3.

⁵⁴ Aquinas, *SCG.III.70.1*, (*Leo.XIV,206-7*), Bourke, pt.1, 235.

⁵⁵ Aquinas, *SCG.III.70.8*, (*Leo.XIV,207*), Bourke, pt.1, 237.

proper end. Of course, the first agent of all things is God...There is no other end for his will than his goodness, which is Himself...⁵⁶

Hierarchy is concerned with the perfection of the beings that constitute it, and therefore with the working of grace. Each grade or degree, by sharing its own goodness, perfects the grade below it. David Luscombe points out that Aquinas, already in his earliest commentaries, on Isaiah (1252-3) and the *Sentences* (1254), “writes of an inviolable law according to which those who occupy the lowest grade are led back to the highest by means of intermediate grades”.⁵⁷ In view of this perfecting function, the ecclesiastical hierarchy represents the heavenly hierarchy on earth, and above them the angelic hierarchy act as perfecting agents on behalf of divinity.

Thomas also describes the arrangement of potencies involved in the process of perfection, sanctification and salvation in terms of a ‘hierarchy of desires’:

Man must, of necessity, desire all, whatsoever he desires, for the last end... And if he desire it, not as his perfect good, which is the last end, he must, of necessity, desire it as tending to the perfect good, because...every beginning of perfection is ordained to complete perfection which is achieved through the last end...(and) secondary objects of the appetite do not move the appetite, except as ordained to the first object of the appetite, which is the last end.⁵⁸

In answer to an objection that “man does not always think of the last end in all that he desires or does”, Thomas replies:

One need not always be thinking of the last end, whenever one desires or does something: but the virtue of the first intention, which was in respect of the last end, remains in any desire directed to any object whatever, even though one’s thoughts be not actually directed to the last end.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Aquinas, SCG.III.17.7,(Leo.XIV,40), Bourke,pt.1,72-3.

⁵⁷ David E.Luscombe, *Thomas Aquinas and Conceptions of Hierarchy in the Thirteenth Century*, *Miscellanea Mediaevalia*,19,1988,263-277. He gives as reference, among others (p.266,n.12): *In Isaiam*,c.6: “*hanc dicit esse legem inviolabilem ut per prima media reducantur infima*”.

⁵⁸ Aquinas, ST.I-II.1.6c,(Leo.VI,14).

⁵⁹ Aquinas, ST.I-II.1.6c,(Leo.VI,14). This should certainly not be seen as a licence to practice a “fundamental option” type of ethic, but is to be interpreted as the counterpart of Thomas’s account of evil and sin as a falling-short of the good, or the orderedness to the good, that ought to be in any actions. See below, pp.35 – 37.

This question in the *Summa* is immediately followed by Thomas's treatise on happiness,⁶⁰ which "means the acquisition of the last end",⁶¹ based partly on Aristotle's eudaemonistic account of virtue⁶². Neither the desire for good nor the desire for happiness can be satiated in this life, because:

..the goods of the present life pass away; since life itself passes away, which we naturally desire to have, and would wish to hold abidingly, for man naturally shrinks from death. Wherefore it is impossible to have true happiness in this life.⁶³

The "specific nature of happiness" is nothing less than "the vision of the divine essence, which man cannot obtain in this life".⁶⁴ This does not invalidate, but rather confirms, Aristotle's dictum that happiness is the good at which all rational beings aim, and that "the good for man is "an activity of soul in accordance with virtue".⁶⁵ If Aristotle is here speaking of the highest happiness attainable in this life, It is clear that for Thomas this corresponds to activity in this life in accordance with the natural desire for ultimate beatitude.

Aquinas: Divine Generosity, Human Receptivity.

I want to draw attention to another point concerning the relationship between divine and human agency in the whole working of natural finality as portrayed by Thomas and, with different emphases, by Bonaventure. Here we are at a point in time prior to the climactic watershed of the "necessitarian crisis" in 1277,⁶⁶ after which the operations of "nature" are progressively devalued in the interests of untrammelled free-will and accountability. It seems to me quite clear that both of these Doctors see the workings of nature oriented to the highest

⁶⁰ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.2-5*,(Leo.VI,17-54).

⁶¹ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.1.8c*,(Leo.VI,16).

⁶² Aristotle, *Nic.Eth.1.7*.

⁶³ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.5.3c*,(Leo.VI,49).

⁶⁴ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.5.3c*,(Leo.VI,49).

⁶⁵ Aristotle, *Nic.Eth.1.7*.

⁶⁶ Below,p.45.

good of the creature as entirely unproblematic precisely because of their “givenness”, and not in spite of it. Not only divine providence is at work here, but divine intimacy and a divine generosity which is entirely natural to God without in any way diminishing divine or human freedom. It only began to be widely seen as a “problem” after 1277. At this stage, I would point out that, for Thomas, the fact of a creature’s being “ordered to God” is a sign or manifestation of ‘enrichment’. He himself uses the word *elargiri*, from which comes *elargitio*, a ‘giving’ or ‘bestowal’, or ‘largesse’, to describe this patrimony of nature:

Now, God, Who is the first agent of all things, does not act in such a way that something is attained [for Himself] by His action, but in such a way that something is enriched by His action. For He is not in potency to the possibility of obtaining something; rather, He is in perfect act simply, and as a result He is a source of enrichment. So, things are not ordered to God as to an end *for which* something may be obtained, but rather so that they may obtain Himself from Himself, according to their measure, since He is their end.⁶⁷

God, the First Agent, is pure generosity, pure largesse: “He intends only to communicate his perfection, which is his goodness”,⁶⁸ in keeping with the primary characteristic of Goodness: *Bonum est diffusivum seu communicativum sui esse*.⁶⁹ Every creature, on the other hand, “intends to acquire its own perfection, which is the likeness of the divine perfection and goodness. Therefore the divine goodness is the end of all things”.⁷⁰ If, notwithstanding the Fall and concupiscence (not to be underestimated), nature still seems to be, in some way, inclined in our favour where our true end is concerned, this does not constitute inadmissible necessity or a threat to free-will and accountability, but, on the contrary, a matter for profound thanksgiving and praise. Human nature is, after all, the means by which the divine goodness has chosen to communicate itself. It is ‘*capax Dei*’.

⁶⁷ Aquinas, SCG.III.18.5,(Leo.XIV,42); Bourke,pt.1,75

⁶⁸ Aquinas, ST.Ia.44.4c,(Leo.IV,461).

⁶⁹ Aquinas, ST.Ia.73.3.ob.2,(Leo.V,188).

⁷⁰ Aquinas, ST.Ia.44.4c,(Leo.IV,461).

A principle of divine generosity, but which, for Thomas, in no way threatens divine freedom, stems from the fact that in God is no potentiality, therefore no matter; He is pure actuality, *actus purus*, “pure Act”.⁷¹ Neither is God’s essence in potentiality to his existence, as in Him they are identical. Matter, as pure potentiality, is “most imperfect”, whereas:

God is the first principle, not material, but in the order of efficient cause, which must be most perfect. For just as matter, as such, is merely potential, an agent, as such, is in the state of actuality. Hence the first active principle must needs be most actual, and therefore most perfect; for a thing is perfect in proportion to its state of actuality, because we call that perfect which lacks nothing of the mode of its perfection.⁷²

Act is prior to potency, just as the animal or plant is prior to the seed which is its life principle.⁷³ Therefore the perfect is prior to the imperfect and,

Existence is the most perfect of all things, for it is compared to all things as that by which they are made actual; for nothing has actuality except so far as it exists. Hence existence is that which actuates all things, even their forms.⁷⁴

The continuation of this passage has particular significance for the theme of this thesis, because of what Thomas says here about existence:

Therefore it is not compared to other things as the receiver to the received; but rather as the received to the receiver. When therefore I speak of the existence of man, or horse, or anything else, existence is considered a formal principle, and as something received; and not as that which exists.

In other words, existence is what all existing created things *receive*; neither is it identical with the thing that receives it. However, the divine mode of being is identical with divinity; and it seems appropriate to note at this point that within the tri-personal divine life (circumincession) of the Godhead, being is both given and received.⁷⁵ The dignity of receptivity therefore exists at the very heart of being.

⁷¹ Aquinas, e.g. *ST.Ia.90.1c*, (*Leo.V,385*); *ST.Ia.79.2c*, (*Leo.V,259*).

⁷² Aquinas, *ST.Ia.4.1c*, (*Leo.IV,50*).

⁷³ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.4.1.ad.2*, (*Leo.IV,50*).

⁷⁴ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.4.1.ad.3*, (*Leo.IV,50*); cf. *De Potentia*, VII.2.ad.9.

⁷⁵ E.g., Aquinas, *ST.Ia.33.3.ad.2*, (*Leo.IV,361*); *SCG.IV,26.12*, (*Leo.XV,101-2*).

Aquinas: Being as Universal: The Transcendental Attributes of Being

The attributes which can be applied to every being, just from the fact that it exists, are the transcendentals. Thomas lists five in *De Veritate* I, namely, 'one', 'true', 'good', 'thing' and 'something', with 'being' itself making a sixth. Like 'being' itself, each has the essential characteristics of a universal: i.e. both unity and community:

Now, since *one* is a transcendental, it is both common to all and adapted to each single thing, just as the good and the true.⁷⁶

Consequently, each is said to be 'convertible' with being,⁷⁷ in that each is said to be really the same as being, but differing only "in idea",⁷⁸ or "as considered by reason".⁷⁹ The essential character of 'one' is undividedness, "for 'one' signifies undivided being".⁸⁰ 'Thing' is used to express 'one' with reference to its essence, and 'something' to express one thing as distinct from another.⁸¹ In the case of 'good',

The essence of goodness consists in this: that it is in some way desirable... Now it is clear that a thing is desirable only insofar as it is perfect; for all desire their own perfection. But everything is perfect so far as it is actual....Hence it is clear that goodness and being are the same really. But goodness presents the aspect of desirableness, which being does not present.⁸²

Thomas does not include 'beautiful' among the transcendentals, but it is clear from all he says that he would place it under 'good'. He relates both 'good' and 'true' to their respective powers of the soul:

Good expresses the correspondence of being to the appetitive power...and so we note in the *Ethics*, the good is "that which all desire".⁸³ *True* expresses the correspondence of being to the knowing power, for all

⁷⁶ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.93.9c*, (Leo.V,412).

⁷⁷ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.6.3.ob.1*, (Leo.IV,68); *Ia.1.1.ob.2:verum, quod cum ente convertitur*, (Leo.IV.6); *ST.I-II.18.1c*, (Leo.VI,127): *bonum enim et ens convertuntur*.

⁷⁸ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.5.1c*, (Leo.IV,56).

⁷⁹ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.29.5c*, (Leo.VI,206).

⁸⁰ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.30.3c*, (Leo.IV,339); *De Veritate*, I.1c, (Leo.XXII,Vol.1.5).

⁸¹ Aquinas, *De Veritate*, I.1c, (Leo.XXII,Vol.1.5).

⁸² Aquinas, *ST.Ia.5.1c*, (Leo.IV,56).

⁸³ Aristotle, *Nic.Eth.I.1*, (1094a 2).

knowing is produced by an assimilation of the knower to the thing known, so that assimilation is said to be the cause of knowledge.⁸⁴

Being and truth are also really the same, hence, “there is no falsity in things, because, in so far as each thing has being, to that extent does it have truth”.⁸⁵

The true is also “the good of the intellect”,⁸⁶ and “the adequation of intellect and thing”.⁸⁷ Each transcendental, like being itself, is concerned with perfection, and is therefore the goal of natural finality. Each is also universal, as an aspect of universal being, which participates in divine being: “But God is good through His essence, whereas all other things are good by participation”.⁸⁸

Aquinas: Natural Finality: Being as Perfection

Because “the perfections of all things must pre-exist in God in a more eminent way”,⁸⁹ Thomas takes a very different view of secondary causality to that which underlies the Augustinian system of ‘seminal principles’, espoused by Bonaventure (see p.151 below). The real efficacy of secondary causes reflects the glory of their Creator, rather than detracting from it as the Franciscan School tended to assume. On the contrary:

But if no creature has any active role in the production of any effect, much is detracted from the perfection of the creature. Indeed, it is part of the fullness of perfection to be able to communicate to another being the perfection which one possesses. Therefore this position detracts from the divine power.⁹⁰

It also detracts from the natural tendency of the creature to seek its perfection by imitating or imaging the Creator:

In fact, a created thing tends toward the divine likeness through its operation. Now through its operation one thing becomes the cause of

⁸⁴ Aquinas, *De Veritate*, I, a. 1, (Leo.XXII, Vol. 1, 5-6), Hackett, Vol. 1. Mulligan, trans., 6.

⁸⁵ Aquinas, SCG.I.61.7, (Leo.XIII, 175), Pegis, 207.

⁸⁶ Aquinas, SCG.I.59.5, (Leo.XIII, 168), quoting Aristotle, *Nic.Eth.* VI.2, (1139a 27).

⁸⁷ Aquinas, SCG.I.59.2, (Leo.XIII, 167), quoting Avicenna, *Metaphysics*, I.9.

⁸⁸ Aquinas, SCG.I.40.3, (Leo.XIII, 116), Pegis, 156.

⁸⁹ Aquinas, ST.Ia.4.2c, (Leo.IV, 51).

⁹⁰ Aquinas, SCG.III.69.15, (Leo.XIV, 200), Bourke trans., pt. 1, 230.

another. Therefore, in this way, also, do things tend toward the divine likeness, in that they are the causes of other things.⁹¹

Consequently, the 'finality' of a nature represents an 'inclination', a 'tendency', which Thomas also calls an 'appetite' and a 'desire', to attain its own fullest perfection by seeking to become 'like God' in whatever way it is ordained to share in divine being and life, whether as a vestige, an image or a likeness.

The term 'finality' itself is of later coinage than the period covered by this thesis, though derived from 'final causality', as applied especially to God as first and final Cause. I use it as a general term covering the reality for which Thomas uses the expressions, "natural appetite" (*appetitus naturalis*)⁹², "natural inclination" (*inclinatio naturalis*)⁹³, "natural tendency" (usually in verbal form, e.g. *tendere in finem*),⁹⁴ "natural desire" (*desiderium naturalis*)⁹⁵, and even on occasions "natural love" (*amor naturalis*)⁹⁶, referring to love of the end or goal of a thing's operation or existence.

Thomas uses these expressions interchangeably, to an extent that is perhaps surprising, although he uses "appetite" more often when speaking of the inclinations of the senses. I propose to use "natural desire" as the 'default' expression for them, where appropriate. What all have in common, in notable distinction from their general modern tenor, is an association with the perfectibility, and the ultimate perfection, of their subjects. This has its basis and

⁹¹ Aquinas, SCG.III.21.2, (Leo.XIV,50), Bourke trans.,pt.1,81.

⁹² E.g., ST.I-II.2.8c, (Leo.VI,24); I-II.17.9c, (Leo.VI,125).

⁹³ E.g., ST.Ia.82.1c, (Leo.V,293); I-II.6.4c, (Leo.VI,59).

⁹⁴ E.g., ST.I-II.12.1c, (Leo.94); Ia.20.1.ad.3, (Leo.IV,253).

⁹⁵ E.g., SCG.III.48.3, (Leo,XIV,130); ST.Ia.12.8.ad.4, (Leo.IV,129).

⁹⁶ E.g., ST.Ia.60.1.ad.3, (Leo.V,98); ST.I-II.26.1c, (Leo.VI,188).

rationale in Aristotle's system of potency and act, drawn from his observations of what actually happens in nature.

“Every agent acts for an end”,⁹⁷ and the end or object of a nature's natural desire is in every case the good of that nature, whether this is seen in terms of being, for “all things desire to be”,⁹⁸ or of perfection, for “every action and movement are for the sake of some perfection”, and “we call what is perfect a good. So, every action and movement is for the sake of a good”.⁹⁹ Therefore all things are ordered to God, the source and first cause of all good.¹⁰⁰

Thomas illustrates the range of ‘natural desire’ in a question concerning the natural law, as the two are inseparably connected. This range involves, quite unambiguously, what man has in common with the whole of sensible creation:

..according to the order of natural inclinations is the order of the precepts of the natural law. Because in man there is first of all an inclination to good in accordance with the nature which he has in common with *all substances*: inasmuch as every substance seeks the preservation of its own being according to its nature: and by reason of this inclination, whatever is a means of preserving human life, and of warding off its obstacles, belongs to the natural law. Secondly, there is in man an inclination to things that pertain to him more specially, according to that nature which he has in common with *other animals*: and in virtue of this inclination, those things are said to belong to the natural law which nature has taught to all animals, such as sexual intercourse, education of offspring and so forth.

This is followed by what pertains to man, on the level of nature, as a rational being distinct from the rest of sensible creation:

Thirdly, there is in man an inclination to good, according to the nature of *his reason*, which nature is proper to him: thus man has a natural inclination to know the truth about God, and to live in society: and in this respect, whatever pertains to this inclination belongs to the natural law; for instance,

⁹⁷ Aquinas, SCG.III.2,(Leo.XIV,5); Bourke trans.,pt.1,34-38.

⁹⁸ Aquinas, SCG.III.3.4,(Leo.XIV,9), Bourke,pt.1,38-9.

⁹⁹ Aquinas, SCG.III.3.5,(Leo.XIV,9), Bourke,pt.1,39.

¹⁰⁰ Aquinas, Cf.SCG.III.17.1-2,(Leo.XIV,40), Bourke,pt.1,71.

to shun ignorance, to avoid offending those among whom one has to live, and other such things regarding the above inclination.¹⁰¹

Aristotle had spoken, at the lowest end of the scale, of the “desire” of matter for form¹⁰² and, at the highest, of the Unmoved First Mover moving all things, as the “object of desire” and the “object of thought”. At the same time, he makes it clear that, as rational beings,

we desire a thing because it seems good rather than consider it good because we desire it; for understanding is the principle of desire. And the intellect is moved by an intelligible object.¹⁰³

Thomas adopts the Aristotelian priority of the intellect over the will in the natural operations of the rational creature, including its “natural desire” for happiness and the last end. The Franciscan perspective, on the other hand, gives first place to the will in the soul's pursuit of its fulfilment. For Bonaventure, the desiring would have been the starting-point, preceded, in rational creatures, only by “the cry of prayer” and “a flash of apprehension”.¹⁰⁴ For both Thomas and Bonaventure, however, in different ways, the natural operations of all things are moved by “desire” for the Source of their being, seeking to imitate its perfection, and to attain thereby the fullness of their being.

Aquinas: Natural Desire for a Supernatural End

The natural finality of human nature was the subject of the 20th century controversy in Catholic theology set off by the publication in 1946 of Henri de Lubac's book, *Surnaturel*.¹⁰⁵ The author insisted that, contrary to received

¹⁰¹ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.94.2c*, (*Leo.VII*, 170), my emphases.

¹⁰² Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IX.5.

¹⁰³ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XII.7.

¹⁰⁴ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, Prologue, 3, (*Quaracchi*, V, 296).

¹⁰⁵ Henri de Lubac, *Surnaturel: Études historiques*, Paris, Aubier, 1946. No English translation, but translated as expanded and clarified, 1965, in two works: *The Mystery of the Supernatural*

wisdom since the 16th century, passages in Thomas such as the following, concerning a *natural* desire for the beatific vision of God that can be fulfilled only by means of a *supernatural* gift of grace, mean exactly what they say:

For there resides in every man a natural desire to know the cause of any effect which he sees; and thence arises wonder in men. But if the intellect of the rational creature could not reach so far as to the first cause of things, the natural desire would remain void. Hence it must be absolutely granted that the blessed see the essence of God.¹⁰⁶

The issue concerns essentially the image of God in which the human soul is created, and which makes it *capax Dei*, so that

The divine substance is not beyond the capacity of the created intellect in such a way that it is altogether foreign to it, as sound is from the object of vision, or as immaterial substance is from the sense power; in fact, the divine substance is the first intelligible object and the principle of all intellectual cognition.¹⁰⁷

The meaning of the phrase, *capax Dei*, which has its origins in Augustine,¹⁰⁸ had become obscured as a result of a tendency to create a rigid separation between human nature and the divine grace which alone can bring it to its true fulfilment. Divine grace, a share or participation in the life of God, comes as pure gift, and pre-supposes receptivity, a readiness or openness to receive, in the person on whom it is bestowed. Fergus Kerr makes the following observation on the meaning of *capax Dei*:

When Thomas, like Augustine long before, speaks of the human creature's being *capax Dei*, it must be remembered that *capacitas* here is understood as a purely passive receptivity, not being 'capable' in the modern sense of having the ability or competence to achieve something but in the pre-modern sense of being open to something one can receive only as a gift.¹⁰⁹

Kerr describes the move to the modern sense mentioned here as a "theologically fateful semantic shift".

and *Augustinianism and Modern Theology*, N.Y., Crossroad Herder, 1998 and 2000 respectively.

¹⁰⁶ Aquinas, *ST*.Ia.12.1c,(*Leo*.IV,115); cf.*ST*.Ia.75.6c,(*Leo*.V,204); *SCG*.II.55.13,(*Leo*.XIII,393-5), Anderson,p.162; *De Malo*,V.1.ad.1,(*Leo*.XXIII,131).

¹⁰⁷ Aquinas, *SCG*.III.54.8,(*Leo*.XIV,149), Bourke,pt.1,184.

¹⁰⁸ Augustine, *De Trinitate*,XIV.8,(*PL*.42,1044).

¹⁰⁹ Kerr, *After Aquinas*, 231,n.2.

De Lubac speaks of the 16th to 18th centuries as “the time when the systematized notion of “pure nature” was developing and coming to hold complete sway”.¹¹⁰ He outlines the history of the idea of a possible *natura pura*, having no finality except to a purely natural end, attainable by human effort, without any reference to divine grace or a supernatural ultimate destination for man.¹¹¹ He retraces it to the Neo-Platonist Denys the Carthusian (1402–1471), who took from Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464) the idea that in man natural desire tends to the natural end only, the natural end being contemplation of the lowest angelic order, the nearest above man. The idea of a human nature closed in on itself and self-sufficient in its own realm would then be adopted and perpetuated by Cajetan (1480-1547), this time based on the attribution to Aquinas of a passage, derived from Aristotle, quoted by Thomas as an objection, therefore *prior to correction* by him. This interpretation of Aristotle *uncorrected* by St. Thomas would then be perpetuated as Thomas’s own by Suarez (1548-1617), another theologian of major significance.

The passage in question, based on Aristotle, *De Caelo*,¹¹² reads as follows:

Since man is more noble than irrational creatures, it seems that he must be better equipped than they. But irrational creatures can attain their end by their natural powers. Much more therefore can man attain Happiness by his natural powers.¹¹³

De Lubac refers to “those who, after too cursory a reading of St. Thomas, have mistaken the objection here for the reply”,¹¹⁴ and have taken it as affirmation by Thomas of a “purely natural” beatitude attainable by man *in via*, while taking no

¹¹⁰ De Lubac, *Mystery*, 4.

¹¹¹ For the following account, see de Lubac, *Mystery*, especially 140-148.

¹¹² Aristotle, *De Caelo*, II.11.

¹¹³ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.5.5.obj.2*, (*Leo.VI*, 51).

¹¹⁴ De Lubac, *Mystery*, 158.

account of Thomas's reply. Thomas begins by saying that the happiness attainable by man by his natural powers is only imperfect happiness, but that man's perfect happiness consists in the vision of the Divine Essence.

Furthermore:

The rational creature, which can attain the perfect good of happiness, but needs the Divine assistance for the purpose, is more perfect than the irrational creature, which is not capable of attaining this good, but attains some imperfect good by its natural powers.¹¹⁵

The error also suited the temper of the times, from a Catholic viewpoint, as a human nature still capable of attaining its supposed entire naturally-appointed end seemed the ideal response to the Protestant definition of human nature as irredeemably corrupted by the Fall. Anything beyond that, besides, was thought to jeopardise the gratuity of divine grace. What it actually did was to make grace something entirely extraneous to human nature in its operation, super-added to it in a quasi-miraculous manner. Thomas, for his part, had never regarded the operation of grace as miraculous in the strict sense, because of human nature's essential receptivity (*habilitas*) to it. Thomas had used the term 'obediential potency' (*potentia obedientialis*) to describe the soul's openness to the supernatural. The fact that this potency is capable of being fulfilled by the reception of sanctifying grace, Thomas says, can only be called 'miraculous' on the grounds that "universally every work that can be performed by God alone can be called miraculous",¹¹⁶ i.e. in a *generic* sense. However, in the particular sense, the fulfilment of a natural potency cannot be regarded as a miracle, therefore "God's justification of the righteous is not miraculous".¹¹⁷ Thomas associated obediential potency with a supernatural finality of human nature; for

¹¹⁵ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.5.5.ad.2*, (*Leo.VI,52*).

¹¹⁶ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.113.10c*, (*Leo.VII,342*).

¹¹⁷ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.113.10c*, (*Leo.VII,342*).

him, it is a passive openness to a grace-assisted growth in connaturality with the divine.¹¹⁸ It might conceivably, I suggest, be called a 'principle of receptivity' of the supernatural.

Thomas compares the ordered finality of creatures in the universe as it actually exists to the melody of a harp. God could have created a different, better, universe (harp), but, in terms of what He has actually created:

The universe, the present creation being supposed, cannot be better, on account of the most beautiful order given to things by God; in which the good of the universe consists. For if any one thing were bettered, the proportion of order would be destroyed. As if one string were stretched more than it ought to be, the melody of the harp would be destroyed. Yet God could make other things, or add something to the present creation; and then there would be another and better universe.¹¹⁹

The *capacitas Dei* of the human rational creature is an important string in Thomas's cosmic 'melody', but certain distinctions have to be made in order to appreciate its precise 'tension', so to speak. One is the distinction between 'desire' and 'disposition' for the supernatural end. 'Natural desire' is a capacity, not a disposition, to receive the supernatural end. The 'desire' is precisely for the disposition in the immediate sense, and only mediately, by the action of grace, for the end:

Everything which is raised up to what exceeds its nature, must be prepared by some disposition above its nature....But when any created nature sees the essence of God, the essence of God itself becomes the intelligible form of the intellect. Hence it is necessary that some supernatural disposition should be added to the intellect in order that it may be raised up to so great and sublime a height...Now this increase of the intellectual powers is called the illumination of the intellect.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Aquinas, *Q.D.de Virtute*, I.10.ad.13, (Atkins trans., 69); cf. *De Veritate* VIII.4.ad.13, (Leo.XXII, Vol. 2, 233), Hackett, Vol. 1 trans., 337; *De Veritate* XXIX, 3.ad.3, (Leo.XXII, Vol. 3, 856), Hackett, Vol. 3, 414.

¹¹⁹ Aquinas, *ST*.Ia.25.6.ad.3, (Leo.IV, 299).

¹²⁰ Aquinas, *ST*.Ia.12.5c, (Leo.IV, 123).

At the level of 'pure nature', prescinding from grace, natural desire has often been described as entirely devoid of any experiential content.¹²¹ However, since the conscious affective faculty is just as 'natural' as the rest of our nature, it seems to me unlikely that an innate capacity unfulfilled would never at any time impinge, however inchoately, upon its possessor's conscious experience. De Lubac, quoting a 19th century scholar, describes it as follows: "The longing that surges from this "depth" of the soul is a longing "born of a lack", and not arising from "the beginnings of possession"". ¹²² The latter comes only with grace. It seems that Thomas would call it desire for the disposition for an end beyond nature's ability to attain.

Aquinas: Receptivity and the Universal

Thomas ascribes receptivity, in the first place, to the 'possible (or passive) intellect'.¹²³ He takes from Aristotle the division of the intellect between its active or 'agent' power and its passive or 'possible' power.¹²⁴ The active and passive intellects are distinct faculties, but together constitute what Thomas calls "the intellect in act":

The thing understood is in the intellect by its own likeness; and it is in this sense that we say that the thing actually understood is the intellect in act, because the likeness of the thing understood is the form of the intellect, as the likeness of a sensible thing is the form of the sense in act. Hence it does not follow that the intelligible species abstracted is what is actually understood; but rather that it is the likeness thereof.¹²⁵

The fact that "the likeness of the thing understood is the form of the intellect in act" is what is meant by the Aristotelian dictum that the intellect becomes, or is

¹²¹ See, for instance, J.E.O'Mahoney, *The Desire of God in the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Cork University Press, 1929, 177.

¹²² De Lubac, *Mystery*, p.84, quoting Gratry, *De la connaissance de Dieu*. Vol.2, 1854, 310-11.

¹²³ See also chapter 3, pp.151-6 below.

¹²⁴ Aristotle, *De Anima*, III.5.

¹²⁵ Aquinas, *ST*.Ia.85.2.ad.1, (Leo.V, 334).

identical with, what it knows.¹²⁶ What is abstracted by the agent intellect is the universal:

we perceive that we abstract *universal* forms from their *particular* conditions, which is to make them actually intelligible.¹²⁷

The universal, which for Ockham is a man-made construct, is associated by Aquinas, on the contrary, with intelligibility, immutability and clarity:

For the light of the active intellect is needed, through which we achieve the unchangeable truth of changeable things, and discern things themselves from their likeness.¹²⁸

Therefore the universal abstracted is the intelligible species, and the intelligible is the immaterial, unchanging and eternal, which contains the light of truth about finite and changeable things. Consequently, in Thomas's perspective, knowledge of universals, as opposed to knowledge of singulars, belongs to the perfection of rational nature:

The natural desire of the rational creature is to know everything that belongs to the perfection of the intellect, namely, the species and genera of things and their types, and these everyone who sees the divine essence will see in God. But to know other singulars, their thoughts and their deeds, does not belong to the perfection of the created intellect, nor does its natural desire go out to these things.¹²⁹

It is quite clear that for Thomas, as for Bonaventure and Scotus in their different perspectives, the universal derives reality, and real intelligibility, from God the Creator as universal cause, and origin of the specific form. The reference to the vision, by the blessed, of the species and genera of things in the divine essence relates to the doctrine of 'divine ideas', the archetypes or exemplars of all created things as they exist eternally in the mind of God. They are an adaptation, used also by Augustine,¹³⁰ of the Platonic doctrine of ideal forms. A divine idea or exemplar "has respect to everything made by God in any period

¹²⁶ Aristotle, *De Anima*, III.4, (429b-430a).

¹²⁷ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.79.4c*, (*Leo.V*, 267), my emphases.

¹²⁸ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.84.6.ad.1*, (*Leo.V*, 324).

¹²⁹ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.12.8.ad.4*, (*Leo.IV*, 129).

¹³⁰ Augustine, *QQ.83,q.46*, (*PL.40*, 29-31).

of time”,¹³¹ like the plans of a house in the mind of an architect. But it is not the ideas, as such, but God Himself, as such, who is the goal of natural, rational finality:

Yet if God alone were seen, who is the fount and principle of all being and of all truth, He would so fill the natural desire of knowledge that nothing else would be desired, and the seer would be completely beatified.¹³²

More will be said concerning the agent intellect and its passive counterpart in chapter 3.

Aquinas on Evil: (i) Evil in Relation to Being

Thomas’s account of the nature of evil and sin describes it as a privation of being, resulting from lack of ordination to the supernatural last end: “Now it is in this that evil consists, namely, in the fact that a thing fails in goodness”¹³³. A failure or “falling-short” of the good which ought to be present in any action or actuality constitutes the evil which is privation of being. Thomas distinguishes this from the defect of good which is merely negation:

Evil...is the privation of good, which chiefly and of itself consists in perfection and act... (and) Because evil is the privation of good, and not a mere negation...therefore not every defect of good is an evil, but the defect of good which is naturally due.

Consequently, while all creatures are good insofar as they participate in the Good, as in Being, “no being is called evil by participation, but by privation of participation. Hence it is not necessary to reduce it to any essential evil”.¹³⁴

“Evil...is the privation of good, which chiefly and of itself consists in perfection

¹³¹ Aquinas, *ST* Ia.15.3c,(*Leo*.IV,204).

¹³² Aquinas, *ST* Ia.12.8.ad.4,(*Leo*.IV,129).

¹³³ Aquinas, *ST* Ia.48.2c,(*Leo*,IV,492).

¹³⁴ Aquinas, *ST* Ia.49.3.ad.4,(*Leo*.IV,503).

and act".¹³⁵ Perfection and actuality are both marks of the fullness of being.

Consequently:

We must speak of good and evil in actions as of good and evil in things: because such as everything is, such is the act that it produces. Now in things, each one has so much good as it has being: since good and being are convertible....We must therefore say that every action has goodness, in so far as it has being: whereas it is lacking in goodness in so far as it is lacking in something that is due to its fullness of being; and thus it is said to be evil: for instance if it lacks the quantity determined by reason, or its due place, or something of the kind.¹³⁶

Similarly, it is the object of an action that confers its moral quality: the fullness, or deficiency, of its being:

..the good or evil of an action, as of other things, depends on its fullness of being or its lack of that fullness. Now the first thing that belongs to the fullness of being seems to be that which gives a thing its species. And just as a natural thing has its species from its form, so an action has its species from its object, as movement from its term.¹³⁷

(ii) Evil in Relation to Ordination to the Last End, Happiness

Seeing that *ens et bonum convertuntur*,¹³⁸ evil has no being of its own; consequently,

..evil has no formal cause, rather is it a privation of form; likewise, neither has it a final cause, but rather is it a privation of order to the proper end; since not only the end has the nature of good, but also the useful [the *bonum utile*], which is ordered to the end.¹³⁹

Evil, which is a deficiency in ordination to the true good, comes about as a result of a deliberate "turning away". However,

Those who sin turn from that in which their last end really consists: but they do not turn away from the intention of the last end, which intention they mistakenly seek in other things.¹⁴⁰

This misdirection of natural desire is the outcome of a failure in apprehension of the means to the true good:

¹³⁵ Aquinas, *ST* Ia.48.5c,(*Leo*.IV,496).

¹³⁶ Aquinas, *ST* I-II.18.1c (*Leo*.VI,127).

¹³⁷ Aquinas, *ST* I-II.18.2c (*Leo*.VI,128).

¹³⁸ Aquinas, *ST* I-II.18.1c,(*Leo*.VI,127); Ia.5.1c,(*Leo*.IV,56).

¹³⁹ Aquinas, *ST* Ia.49.1c (*Leo*.IV,499), my parenthesis.

¹⁴⁰ Aquinas, *ST* I-II.1.7 ad.1 (*Leo*.VI,15).

That to which the will tends by sinning, although in reality it is evil and contrary to the rational nature, nevertheless is apprehended as something good and suitable to nature, in so far as it is suitable to man by reason of some pleasurable sensation or some vicious habit.¹⁴¹

Aquinas: Universals and Nature

Thomas distinguishes between the nature abstracted and its universality: the universality exists only in the intellect, the nature abstracted only in the individual:

..the words *abstract universal* imply two things, the nature of a thing and its abstraction or universality. Therefore the nature itself to which it occurs to be understood, abstracted or considered as universal is only in individuals; but that it is understood, abstracted or considered as universal is in the intellect...In like manner humanity understood is only in this or that man; but that humanity be understood without conditions of individuality, that is, that it be abstracted and consequently considered as universal, occurs to humanity inasmuch as it is brought under the consideration of the intellect, in which there is a likeness of the specific nature, but not of the principles of individuality.¹⁴²

For this reason, Thomas considers a nature to be universal only in a strictly qualified sense, as 'considered absolutely' (*absolute considerata*). Therefore it exists in the individual only as the 'form of the part', prescinding from all individual differences. 'Animal' and 'man' can be taken as universals just insofar as "the nature predicated of (them) falls under the aspect of universality, i.e., insofar as animal or man is considered as a one-in-many".¹⁴³ One-in-many, here, does not mean one *among* many, but one *in* many, in the sense of being present in many. In keeping with its Platonic provenance, the type of immanence required by a universal is that which makes predication possible: complete identity in reality with the individual instance. Consequently, the

¹⁴¹ Aquinas, *ST I-II.6.4 ad.3*, (Leo.VI,60)

¹⁴² Aquinas, *ST.Ia.85.2.ad.2*, (Leo.V,334).

¹⁴³ Aquinas, *In Metaph.VII,lec.13*, n.1570, Rowan trans..521.

notions of unity and community both belong inherently to the concept
'universal':¹⁴⁴

A Thomistic universal, as such, unlike a Platonic Idea, is found only in the intellect, and never in the sensible thing that is known by its means. However, for Thomas, as for Aristotle, existence in the intellect, abstracted from sensible objects, is, nevertheless a type of real existence:

..singular things composed of matter and form are not intelligible but sensible. Therefore, if there is nothing apart from singular things which are composed of matter and form, nothing will be intelligible but all beings will be sensible. But there is science only of things which are intelligible. Therefore it follows that there will be no science of anything, unless one were to say that sensory perception and science are the same...¹⁴⁵

Likewise, a real distinction between essence as potentiality, and being as actuality and perfection, i.e., between two 'states' or degrees of perfection of the same subject, can be seen as a natural adjunct and prerequisite to 'finality' in creatures, which seek their perfection as the fullness of their being. It would seem that dismissal of the former must logically lead to dismissal of the latter. Yet there can be no doubt that Thomas saw this aspect of creaturely existence as a reality. Certainly, Aristotle had no notion of a real distinction between being and essence; but neither did he have any knowledge of a Creator God who is *Ipsium Esse*.

The being of all creatures is received or participated being. Although God is not universal being in a pantheistic sense that would involve Him in a form of unity and community with the being of creatures, He is nevertheless the

¹⁴⁴ Aquinas, *De Ente*, III, 5, (Leo. XLIII, 374), Maurer, 47.

¹⁴⁵ Aquinas, *In Metaph.* III, lec. 9, n. 448, Rowan, 166.

universal cause of being, and so enters into a “community of cause” with creatures as first efficient cause. This finds its crowning expression in the community of redemption:

The incarnate Son of God is the common Saviour of all, not by a generic or specific community, such as is attributed to the nature separated from the individuals, but by a community of cause, whereby the incarnate Son of God is the universal cause of human salvation.¹⁴⁶

Nature as it exists in individuals is, in Thomas’s account, not strictly knowable by the human intellect.¹⁴⁷

ST. BONAVENTURE (c.1220-1274)

Christ the Centre

Bonaventure’s metaphysics is radically and explicitly Christ-centred. It has been said that his most outstanding achievement is “the development of a *theological* metaphysics...(which) enabled him to concentrate on the Word of God as the principle of universal intelligibility”.¹⁴⁸ The whole of reality, for him, is encompassed by Christ’s mission and exemplarity. While Thomas undoubtedly agrees with this,¹⁴⁹ he seems always to have had in mind the exigencies of possible dialogue with Muslim, Jewish and other non-Christian philosophers.¹⁵⁰ Bonaventure, for his part, is concerned to counter any possible separation or parting of the ways between theology and its ‘handmaid’, philosophy.

Characteristically, he summarizes his own metaphysic along Trinitarian lines:

¹⁴⁶ Aquinas, *ST.III.4.4.ad.1*, (*Leo.XI*,82-83).

¹⁴⁷ Aquinas, *De Veritate* II.4.ad.1, (*Leo.XXII*, Vol. 1,57), Hackett, Vol.I, Mulligan, trans., 80.

¹⁴⁸ Ilia Delio, OSF, *Bonaventure’s Metaphysics of the Good*, Theological Studies, 60, 1999, 228-246, 229.

¹⁴⁹ However, as Thomas takes the view that, without sin, there would have been no Incarnation (*ST.IIIa.1.3c*, *Leo*, XI, 14), he regards Christ as efficient and instrumental cause, rather than exemplar cause, of salvation.

¹⁵⁰ This is clearly the intention, as the names imply, of both the *Summa Contra Gentiles* and *De Rationibus Fidei Contra Saracenos*.

As the Son expresses it: I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again I leave the world and go to the Father (John 16:28). Likewise let anyone say: "Lord, I came out of You, the Supreme Being: I will return to You and through You, the Supreme Being.

Such is the metaphysical Centre that leads us back, and this is the sum total of our metaphysics: concerned with emanation, exemplarity, and consummation, that is, illumination through spiritual radiations and return to the Supreme Being. And in this you will be a true metaphysician.¹⁵¹

The mysterious way of man's participation in the divine *Esse* has been made known. In the words of Bonaventure from his treatise, *The Mind's Journey into God (Itinerarium Mentis in Deum)*:

Christ is the way: Christ is the door. By Christ we mount, by Christ we are borne, for he is 'the mercy-seat placed upon the ark of God', 'the mystery hidden from all ages'.¹⁵²

Bonaventure describes "two ways or degrees of contemplation of the invisible and eternal things of God", in the two perspectives of divine Oneness and Threeness:

The first way, first and foremost, signifies Him in Being itself, saying *He Who Is* is the primary name of God. The second signifies Him in His goodness, saying this [Goodness] is the primary name of God. The former refers above all to the Old Testament, which preaches the unity of the divine essence, whence it was said to Moses, "I am Who am". The second refers to the New Testament, which lays down the plurality of the Persons, by baptizing in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.¹⁵³

Bonaventure expresses his intention "to show that in Christ *are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge* (Col.2:3), and that He Himself is the central point of all understanding".¹⁵⁴ Christ is portrayed as the hermeneutical key, so to speak, to the whole metaphysical order of "essence", as well as to the other orders of human knowledge and understanding. The "*Esse*" of the Old Testament understanding, in which God is revealed as the "I Am", becomes one

¹⁵¹ Bonaventure, *In Hexaemeron* I.17, (*Quaracchi*, V, 332); José de Vinck, trans., *The Works of Bonaventure*, Vol. V, *Collations on the Six Days*, Paterson, N.J., St. Anthony Guild Press, 1970, 10; cf. I.13, (*Quar. V*, 331) and *De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam*. 4, (*Quar. V*, 320-1).

¹⁵² Bonaventure, *Itinerarium* VII.1, (*Quaracchi*, V, 312); Divine Office, Vol. III, trans., 112*

¹⁵³ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium* V.2, (*Quar. V*, 308); George Boas trans., *St. Bonaventura: The Mind's Road to God*, Indianapolis, Bobs-Merrill, 1953, p. 34.

¹⁵⁴ Bonaventure, *In Hexaemeron* I.11, (*Quar. V*, 330-1); de Vinck, 6.

in Christ, the “mercy-seat”, with the “Essence” of the New Testament understanding, in which God is revealed as One-in-Three: the attributes, One, True and Good reflecting the Persons. Consequently, the individual creature is “an effect of the creating Trinity in virtue of a triple causality”:¹⁵⁵

Hence, He must be the threefold cause of all creatures: efficient, exemplary and final. As a result, every creature must bear the same threefold reference to the first Cause: for everyone *exists (constituitur in esse)* by virtue of the *efficient* cause, is *patterned* after the *exemplary* cause, and *ordained* toward the *final* cause. For this reason, every creature is one, true and good...¹⁵⁶

Bonaventure: Being and Essence

Bonaventure’s ontology of the divine and human modes of being corresponds to Thomas’s, but with rather more emphasis on essence in the wide sense (*ens*). In the *Itinerarium*, in which the mind ascends by stages to the contemplation of God, and ultimately to the Beatific Vision, Bonaventure addresses the reader:

If you wish then to contemplate the invisible traits of God in so far as they belong to the unity of His essence, fix your gaze upon Being itself, and see that Being is most certain in itself; for it cannot be thought not to be, since the purest Being occurs only in full flight from Non-Being, just as nothingness is in full flight from Being.¹⁵⁷

Without it we can know nothing, just as the eye, without light, can see nothing.

However, echoing Augustine and Thomas on the light of the mind:

Just as the eye intent upon the various differences of the colours does not see the light by which it sees the other things and, if it sees it, does not notice it, so the mind’s eye, intent upon particular and universal beings, does not notice Being itself, which is beyond all genera, though that comes first before the mind and through it all other things.¹⁵⁸

Anyone who does see or apprehend it will come to understand that “lacking non-being in every respect and therefore having no beginning nor end, it is

¹⁵⁵ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium* II.1.2, (*Quar.V*, 219); José de Vinck trans., *The Works of Bonaventure*, Vol. II, *The Breviloquium*, Paterson, N.J., St. Anthony Guild Press, 1963, 70.

¹⁵⁶ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium* II.1.4, (*Quar.V*, 219), de Vinck, 71, my emphases..

¹⁵⁷ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium* V.3, (*Quar.V*, 308), my emphases; cf., *In Hexaemeron*, II.25, (*Quar.V*, 340).

¹⁵⁸ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium* V.4, (*Quar.V*, 309); cf. Augustine, *De Trin.* XII, 15.24, p. 150 below.

eternal”, and that, having “nothing in itself save Being in itself... it is in no way composite, but is most simple”, that it “has no potentialities... but is the highest actuality”, that it “has no defect, for it is most perfect”, and finally, that it “has no diversity, for it is One in the highest degree”.¹⁵⁹

The oneness of the divine *Esse* is inseparable from God’s activity as First Cause. Everything in which there is multiplicity must stem from that in which there is no multiplicity; everything in which there is composition of essence and existence, and of matter and form must stem from that which is purely simple, and in which essence and existence are identical. However, Bonaventure differs from Aquinas here in that, where Thomas speaks of distinction, or absence of distinction, *vis-à-vis* God and creatures, in terms of *ens*, or *esse*, on the one hand, and *essentia* on the other hand, Bonaventure focuses, rather, on the distinction between *ens* and *esse*, or ‘thing’ and ‘being’, or, in other words between *quod est* and *quo est*, as he understands the terms.

The *ens* or *quod est* is the thing itself, the concrete substance or ‘what is’; the *esse* or *quo est* is *that which* it is, but in the abstract or universal:

Just as in general (or universal: *in communi*) in creatures here below is found *quod est* and *quo est*, signifying in the concrete and in the abstract, as with man and humanity: so in divinity, but without understanding any distinction between the two.¹⁶⁰

“The divine being alone is simple, for in it, there is no difference between being, being such, and being fittingly”¹⁶¹ In creatures, *ens* and *esse* are distinct:

¹⁵⁹ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium* V.5,(*Quar.*V,309), Boas,36.

¹⁶⁰ Bonaventure, *Sent.*I,d.23,a.1,q.1,concl.,(*Quar.*I,409),my translation, ...*cum in communi in inferioribus inveniatur quod est et quo est, ratione cuius significatur in concretione et in abstractione, ut dicatur homo et humanitas: sic in divinis intelligimus, quamvis non intelligamus in differentia illa duo.*

¹⁶¹ Bonaventure, *In Hexaemeron*,II.25,(*Quar.*V,340),de Vinck,34.

No creature is pure act, because in every creature...*quo est* and *quod est* are distinct, therefore in every creature is actuality and potentiality; but every such being has in it multiformity and lacks simplicity.¹⁶²

Bonaventure: The Analogy of Being

While analogy, proportion and correspondence constitute a major element in Bonaventure's works, his understanding of the "analogy of being" differs from Thomas's mainly in placing more emphasis on the analogy between relations, especially between Trinitarian relations and their analogical counterparts in creation, so that divine Fatherhood and Sonship are valid analogies for their human counterparts; likewise with all relationships involving measure, number¹⁶³ and weight, which are seen as echoing the Trinitarian relations. Bonaventure's works witness to the extraordinary fecundity of this concept of analogy. We are given an entire cosmos shot through and through with Trinitarian analogy, and with "desire" in the form of natures "weighted" or "ordered" towards their own perfection.¹⁶⁴ In the light of the Incarnation, this means towards eternal redemption, a concept already enshrined in St. Paul's words concerning the dispositions of all created things (Rom.8:19-22).

Bonaventure: Natural Finality

For Bonaventure, as we have already seen¹⁶⁵, Christ is the "metaphysical Centre", the supreme Exemplar, who "leads us back" to the Father. It is especially clear in Bonaventure that the element of "givenness" (Thomas's *elargitio*), and of the divine gratuitousness it implies, lies at the heart of all

¹⁶² Bonaventure, *Sent.*I,d.8,p.2,q.2,f.1,(*Quar.*I,167),my trans., *Nulla creatura est actus purus, quia in omni creatura...differt quo est et quod est, ergo in omni creatura est actus cum possibili; sed omnis talis habet in se multiformitatem et caret simplicitate.*

¹⁶³ Cf.*Itinerarium*,II.10,(*Quar.*V,302),Boas,20.

¹⁶⁴ Cf.*In Hexaemeron*,II.23,(*Quar.*V,340),de Vinck,33.

¹⁶⁵ p.40 above.

being, and of creation, and calls forth a total response in the recipient creature of thanksgiving, praise and love.¹⁶⁶ The creature is made for this: it is its very nature, its fulfilment and its happiness, its intrinsic finality. All of this is in accordance with the nature of God as the Good:

God's being is supreme good, wherefore it supremely diffuses itself in a threefold outpouring: utterly actual, complete, and directed toward an end... Likewise, this production is utterly FINAL, in that the producing being grants all that He can. But the creature is unable to receive all that God can grant.¹⁶⁷

As with Thomas, finality in the creature entails natural inclination, or ordination, to the fullness of its being, to receiving all that its nature is capable of receiving of the divine gratuity, including the grace of reciprocal self-gift. This is the true good of the rational creature, the fulfilment of its nature. This truth is signed in creation itself, which was God's first word to man:

Thus, in the state of innocence, when the image had not yet been distorted but was conformed to God through grace, the book of creation sufficed to enable man to perceive the light of divine Wisdom. He was then so wise that, seeing all things in themselves, he also saw them in their proper genus as well as in God's creating Art.¹⁶⁸

The phrase, "in their proper genus as well as in God's creating Art" recalls Bonaventure's fundamental position that all the sciences, to attain true wisdom and knowledge, need Divine revelation and the understanding it gives of God's purposes. Man, in his unfallen state, would have had true knowledge and understanding of his own nature's intrinsic ordination to its greatest good, which is union with God. The book of creation would have been open to him because

There is a certain order in these things. For God creates all essences by measure and number and weight (Wisdom 11:20). And by giving these, He gives mode, species and order. Mode is that by which a thing exists; species, that by which it is distinct; order, that by which it is fitting. For there is no creature that is not endowed with measure, quantity and inclination.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ This element is especially prominent in Bonaventure's treatise, "The Mind's Journey into God" (*Itinerarium Mentis ad Deum*)

¹⁶⁷ Bonaventure, *In Hexaemeron* XI,11,(*Quar.V*,381-2),emphasis in de Vinck,163.

¹⁶⁸ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium* II,12,4,(*Quar.V*,230),de Vinck,105.

¹⁶⁹ Bonaventure, *In Hexaemeron* II,23,(*Quar.V*,340),de Vinck,33.

This is further explained in the *Breviloquium*. “Mode” or “measure” refers to the creature’s dependence on the First Principle as efficient cause and source of its existence (the Father); “number” or “species” refers to distinct existence, “patterned after the exemplary cause” (the Son), and “weight” or “order” refers to the creature’s natural inclination or tendency towards its final end (to be attained in and through the Holy Spirit), for “weight is defined as an orderly tendency”, and “All this applies to every creature in general, whether material, spiritual or composite, as is human nature”.¹⁷⁰ In reference to the attributes “one, true and good, the “natural inclination” or “orderly tendency” is identified specifically with “the good”. In the *Itinerarium* he adds “substance, power and operation” by way of further explanation of measure, number and weight. “From these one can rise as from the traces to understanding the power, wisdom and immense goodness of the Creator”.¹⁷¹

THE PARIS CONDEMNATIONS OF 1277

The “necessitarian crisis” of the later 13th century arose in the wake of the re-appropriation of Aristotle via the Moslem philosophers, Avicenna and Averroës. Here, the necessity involved in God’s being, and in the Trinitarian relations, would be extrapolated outwards to all of God’s creative actions. The earth itself, and all it contains, would come to be seen by some as a work of necessity, entailing necessary causes and relations accessible to human reason; likewise the Incarnation, and the history of salvation. Pieper comments:

Such “necessitarianism”, in so far as it can at all be meaningfully coordinated with the Christian world view, plainly needs a double corrective. One corrective had already been present and effective in Western Christianity for several hundred years...this was the idea of “negative” theology as formulated in the works of Dionysius the Areopagite [Pseudo-

¹⁷⁰ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium* II.1.4, (*Quar.* V, 219), de Vinck, 71.

¹⁷¹ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium* I.11, (*Quar.* V, 298), Boas, 11.

Dionysius]. The other corrective is contained within a single watchword: freedom. This one word was also the battle-cry of Duns Scotus.¹⁷²

The Church's response at the time to what was perceived as the danger of extreme Aristotelianism came with the list of 219 articles condemned by edict of Bishop Tempier of Paris in 1277. Pieper sees the Condemnations of 1277 as a major watershed in the history of scholasticism, and of the teaching of theology and philosophy. Roland Hissette sees them as the work of "*théologiens conservateurs, qui, pour mieux résister aux attaques de la philosophie païenne, se rangent sous la bannière de S. Augustin*".¹⁷³ On the question of free will, article no. 161, on the supposed determination of the will by its desired object, can be taken as representative of the articles condemned:

That the will as such is, like matter, undetermined towards opposites; it is, however, determined by the appetible object, as matter is by the informing agent.¹⁷⁴

Hissette comments on this:

*Source non identifiée. Il s'agit selon toute vraisemblance d'un maître ès arts, partisan, comme Thomas d'Aquin, de la prééminence de l'intelligence sur la volonté, mais moins soucieux que lui de nuancer la portée de ses affirmations: jamais le saint docteur n'aurait admis qu'en face de l'objet appétible, la volonté est aussi passive que la matière soumise à l'agent qui lui impose sa forme.*¹⁷⁵

Thomas himself, to be followed by other "*Aristotéliciens modérés soucieux*", while teaching in Paris twenty years earlier, had perceived not only the danger presented by radical Aristotelianism, but also the potentially serious loss to be incurred by its indiscriminate rejection, regardless of the truth it contains and its possible value in the role of *ancilla theologiae*. His subsequent synthesis would, in its own right, attract the suspicions of those "ranged under the banner of St Augustine". On the question of free will, and matters pertaining thereto, it would

¹⁷² Joseph Pieper, *Scholasticism: Personalities and Problems of Medieval Philosophy*, South Bend, Indiana, St. Augustine's Press, 2001, 136.

¹⁷³ Roland Hissette, *Enquête sur les 219 articles condamnés à Paris le 7 Mars, 1277*, Philosophes Médiévaux, Tome XXII, Louvain, Publications Universitaires, 1977, 7.

¹⁷⁴ Hissette, *Enquête*, 253, my translation.

¹⁷⁵ Hissette, *Enquête*, 254.

also attract the systematic opposition of, among others, Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus.

A major scholarly publication of the last decade (2001) on the subject of the 1277 Condemnations is the collection of 35 essays published under the title, *Nach der Verurteilung von 1277*.¹⁷⁶ In his introductory essay giving an overview of the volume's contents, Kent Emery points out that Bonaventure, in his last work before his death in 1274, gives an account of the four main errors dealt with in the 13 articles condemned earlier at Paris in 1270, namely, the necessity of fate, the eternity of the world, the specific unity of the human intellect, and a "natural beatitude" or intellectual felicity attainable in this life. Apart from noting that many other notions of the philosophers may be reduced to these four, Emery makes no further reference to any of them in his overview, including the subject of natural necessity which features prominently in the 1277 Condemnations. It would appear that contemporary scholarly preoccupations lie elsewhere, as Emery's account focuses mainly on the following issues: 1) the different perceptions of the relationship between philosophy and theology at the time: philosophy as either *ancilla theologiae*, or entirely autonomous discipline; 2) relations between Church authority and the university faculties of Arts and Theology, and 3) the historical significance of the Condemnations and their impact: whether watershed or merely symptomatic of much longer-term trends. The latter include the long-term survival of the condemned Aristotelian pantheist tendencies, notably in Germany in the *mystique rhénane* associated with Meister Eckhart and others.

¹⁷⁶ Jan A. Aertsen, Kent Emery Jr. and Andreas Speer eds., *After the Condemnations of 1277: Philosophy and Theology at the University of Paris in the Last Quarter of the Thirteenth Century*, *Miscellanea Mediaevalia* 28, 2001.

Emery's overview of these contemporary scholarly preoccupations is echoed in a later review (2003) of the same volume by Luca Bianchi.¹⁷⁷ However, Bianchi does also make reference to a common agreement among the contributing authors that "doctrines of the intellect and the ideal of philosophical felicity" in this life were "among the main problems at stake" in the period of the Condemnations.¹⁷⁸ This clearly refers to the "natural beatitude" or intellectual felicity attainable in this life, without reference to divine grace, listed by Bonaventure among the chief concerns of the 1270 condemnations.

In addition, Bianchi acknowledges having, in his own contribution, "included the distinction between God's absolute and ordained power among the main causes which accelerated the metamorphosis of Scholastic discourse in the fourteenth century", and which "introduced significant departures from the Aristotelian framework".¹⁷⁹ The distinction between God's *potentia absoluta* and *potentia ordinata* will be, as I show in chapter 2, an element in Scotus's account of divine freedom, and an essential key to Ockham's entire metaphysics. On the other hand, the idea of "pure nature", and an Aristotelian "natural beatitude" or intellectual felicity attainable *in via* without reference to grace or revelation, would, as already noted (p.30 above), enjoy a far longer and wider vogue, at least in the West, right up to the twentieth century.

Neither Emery nor Bianchi, in the review essays mentioned, makes any reference to the issues of 'natural finality' or of 'natural necessity vs. freedom

¹⁷⁷ Luca Bianchi, *New Perspectives on the Condemnation of 1277 and its Aftermath*, *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales* 70,n.1,2003,206-229.

¹⁷⁸ Bianchi, *Perspectives*,218.

¹⁷⁹ Bianchi, *Perspectives*,229.

and free-will'. These are evidently not among the contemporary preoccupations of the scholars represented in *Nach der Verurteilung von 1277*. They were certainly, however, among the principal preoccupations of the most prominent collaborator of Tempier in drawing up the list of articles for condemnation, namely, the secular clerk and scholar, Henry of Ghent (d.1293). Henry's radical account of the superiority of will over intellect will be dealt with in chapter 2, and his account of divine illumination in chapter 3.

JOHN DUNS SCOTUS (c.1265-1308)

Univocity of Being

Scotus introduces what was at the time his controversial theory of univocity in the context of his treatment of the knowability of God in *Ordinatio* I. Henry of Ghent, in the aftermath of the 1277 Condemnations, had presented a theory of divine knowability which combined Augustinian illumination with Aristotelian abstraction, to arrive at his own distinctive theory of strictly analogical knowledge of God, based on Aristotelian abstraction from the sensible. Scotus sees Henry's account of analogy as creating an unbridgeable gap between ordinary language and any possible true discourse about God. He accepts that, in practice, we sometimes use analogy when speaking of God; however:

I say that God is thought of not only in some concept analogous to that of a creature, that is, one entirely different from what is predicated of a creature, but also in some concept univocal to himself and to a creature... I call that concept univocal that has sufficient unity in itself that to affirm and deny it of the same subject suffices as a contradiction.¹⁸⁰

Scotus proposes five principal reasons in favour of a univocal concept of being:

Firstly, the concept of God as a being, which might be called an entitative

¹⁸⁰ Scotus, *Ordinatio* I, d.3, n.26, (Vat. III, 18); William A. Frank and Allan B. Wolter trans., *Duns Scotus, Metaphysician*, West Lafayette, Indiana, Purdue University Press, 1995, 109.

concept, is clearly distinguishable from the concept of God as this or that, i.e., a quidditative concept. In addition, and from experience:

..the intellect of a person in this life can be certain that God is a being while doubting whether this being is finite or infinite, created or uncreated; therefore the concept of God as a being is other than this or that concept; and although included in each of these, it is none of them of itself, and therefore it is univocal.¹⁸¹

Being *qua* being is the most basic, and the most certain, of concepts. As such, it is the first object of the intellect, whose presence to the mind is necessary for any knowledge whatever. In addition, the primacy of being as a univocal concept is seen by Scotus as the *sine qua non* for metaphysics, for any language about God, and for any science of theology. Although he himself sometimes resorts to analogy, Scotus maintains that, without univocity of being, analogy would be mere equivocation, and no language or understanding of God would be possible.¹⁸² Besides this, what actually makes language about God possible is the fact that *being*, rather than *quidditas*, is the first object of the intellect (Cf. Aquinas, p.11 above). As Ingham points out, Scotus establishes this “by means of his usual methodological procedure, moving from experience to what grounds the possibility of that experience”.¹⁸³

Secondly, he accepts and makes use of Aristotle’s cognitive model, involving sense knowledge, mental species and agent intellect. The intellect is moved naturally by the object as revealed in the sense image (or phantasm), and by the active intellect, which assigns effects to causes. At the same time, he holds that this model of abstractive cognition is incapable of providing an *analogical*

¹⁸¹ Frank and Wolter, *Metaphysician*, 111.

¹⁸² See *Ordinatio* I, d.3, n.139, (Vat.III, 87); *Lectura* I, d.3, n.113, (Vat.XVI, 266).

¹⁸³ Mary Beth Ingham and Mechtild Dreyer, *The Philosophical Vision of John Duns Scotus, An Introduction*, Washington DC, CUA Press, 2004, 41.

basis for natural knowledge of God.¹⁸⁴ Such knowledge has to be based on a *univocal* concept of being, which alone is capable of bridging the chasm between human knowing and divine being. Without it, there can be no natural knowledge of God, therefore no metaphysics or science of theology.

Thirdly, no one in this life (*pro statu isto*) has natural knowledge of God according to the divine essence "*ut haec*": just as it is in itself, or "in a particular and proper way" (*in particulari et proprie*).¹⁸⁵ Such knowledge belongs only in the beatific vision, where the Blessed enjoy God not as a natural object, but as an *objectum voluntarium*. Univocity of being obtains only with regard to general notions (*in generalibus rationibus*), of which the concept of *being* is the most basic, and extends virtually to all that exists. On this basis, some scientific reflection can take place.

Fourthly, on the basis of a univocal concept, one can take the formal notion of some proper perfection: wisdom, or goodness, for instance, and attribute it to God in the highest degree by subtracting from it the imperfections and limitations seen in creatures. This is the *via eminentiae* (the opposite of the *via negativa*), as formal notions are attributed to God "in a most perfect way".¹⁸⁶ Scotus cites Augustine in support of it.¹⁸⁷

Fifthly, the transcendental attributes of being: oneness, truth and goodness, which apply to God in an eminent way, are known of God from their likenesses in creatures:

¹⁸⁴ *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, nn. 35-36, (Vat. III, 21-24).

¹⁸⁵ *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, nn. 56-57, (Vat. III, 38-39).

¹⁸⁶ *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, nn. 39-40, (Vat. III, 26-27).

¹⁸⁷ *Ordinatio*, II, d. 3, n. 399, (Vat. VII, 564); Augustine, *De Trinitate*, VIII, 3, (PL. 42, 950).

..and thus, creatures, which impress in the intellect a likeness (*species*) proper to themselves, can also impress the *species* of the transcendentals, which are applicable commonly to themselves and to God..¹⁸⁸

The transcendentals are the primary focus of metaphysical reflection. As, by definition, they are beyond the Aristotelian categories, and beyond sense perception, it follows that univocity of being is the primary condition for the possibility of any metaphysics or theology.

Scotus: Being and Essence

Scotus, according to Cross, “does not believe it is possible to make any sense of a distinction between essence and *esse*”.¹⁸⁹ Nevertheless, he accepts divine being as necessary, as precluding any passivity, i.e. potentiality, and as “having every condition necessarily required for existence”.¹⁹⁰ He nowhere explicitly discusses Aquinas’s view that God is identical with his *esse*, and therefore with his attributes, except to say that “I do not know that fiction according to which existence is something that supervenes on essence”.¹⁹¹ Cross expands on this:

Causing an individual, for example, and causing its existence are just one and the same thing. In this sense, there is no distinction between individual and existence in anything, and *a fortiori* not in God. What precisely Aquinas intends is, of course, a matter of huge and sometimes acrimonious dispute. It is certainly clear that, whatever the teaching is supposed to be, Scotus is just not interested in it.¹⁹²

One of the results, as Cross acknowledges, is that Scotus’s theory is criticized by “more apophatically minded” theologians, such as Aquinas’s followers, “for sanctioning a God who is insufficiently different from creation”.¹⁹³ It is true that

¹⁸⁸ *Ordinatio*, I, d.3, n.61, (*Vat.* III, 42).

¹⁸⁹ Richard Cross, *Duns Scotus on God*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2005, 10.

¹⁹⁰ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d.8, p.1, q.3, n.149, (*Vat.* IV, 227), Cross, *Scotus on God*, 114, n.56.

¹⁹¹ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, IV, d.11, q.3, n.46, (*Olms-Wadding*, VIII, 649), Cross, 114, n.56.

¹⁹² The distinction between individual (*ens*) and existence (*esse*) which Cross here attributes to Thomas is actually Bonaventure’s account of the mode of being in creatures, based on the notion that ‘to be is to be an essence’ (see p.42 above). For Thomas, to be is to be *in act*, and he places the distinction between *ens* or *esse* as the being or its *act* of being, and *essentia* as the essence or quiddity (or nature). See George P. Klubertanz, ‘Esse’ and ‘Existere’ in St. Bonaventure, *Medieval Studies*, 8, 1946, 169-188.

¹⁹³ Cross, *Scotus on God*, 11.

Thomas's approach to the being of God, heavily indebted to Pseudo-Dionysius, is based on the *via remotionis*,¹⁹⁴ meaning that we can more readily say what God is not, rather than what He is. It is also true that Thomas's distinction between being and essence in creatures stems partly from a concern to maintain the difference in mode of being between creature and Creator. While Bonaventure clearly takes a similar approach, Scotus's approach to the difference in mode of being rests on the infinite/finite distinction, rather than on Thomas's simple/composite distinction.¹⁹⁵ The doctrine of divine ineffability, so much stressed by Thomas and (to a lesser extent) Henry of Ghent, is "greatly weakened" in Scotus, and as Cross observes:

The difference between God and creatures, at least with regard to God's possession of the pure perfections, is ultimately one of degree. Specifically, the perfections exist in an infinite degree in God, and in a finite degree in creatures....¹⁹⁶

Since infinity necessarily implies simplicity, it seems that there is no essential contradiction between their respective starting-points; but it was Scotus's more easily grasped univocal concept of being that would set the precedent thereafter.

Scotus: Natural Finality

What interests us here concerning the eclipse of Thomas's account of divine and human modes of being is its possible implication for the understanding of natural finality in creatures. The concept of finality is intrinsic to Thomas's account of the 'hierarchy of being' (above, p.17), in which multiplicity and the mutual ordering of creatures to one another and to God as ultimate source and goal are seen as necessary to the perfection of the universe. Likewise, the

¹⁹⁴ Cf. Aquinas, *SCG.I.14*, (*Leo.XIII*,40), Pegis,96-7.

¹⁹⁵ E.g., Scotus, *Quodlibet*, V, (Olms-Wadding, XII,117-141).

¹⁹⁶ Richard Cross, *Duns Scotus*, Great Medieval Thinkers, OUP,1999,39.

hylomorphism of matter and form, potency and act, is an integral element of the hierarchical nature of the cosmos. The same applies to Bonaventure's scheme (below, p.172) of the emanation and return (*exitus – reditus*) of all things to the Creator by means of the salvific action of the 'exemplar cause', the Incarnate Word, and illumination by the Holy Spirit. However, another element remains, which may turn out to be the key to the whole universe of natural finality: this is the "ordering" of essence to being ("I call 'essence' that whose actuality is being", p.12 above) in all created things. Whatever seeks its perfection seeks the fullness of its being, by drawing closer to God in likeness; and all things intend to seek their perfection, being "ordered" to it. This natural potency of essence to being in creatures is the element which Scotus rejects; it is clearly not in keeping with his univocal concept of being. Nevertheless, he agrees with Thomas on other essential aspects of finality. Scotus says of the ultimate end:

Man is ordered to a supernatural end, for which he is of himself indisposed; he falls short, then, of being disposed to possessing that end. This [being disposed] happens through some imperfect supernatural cognition...¹⁹⁷

Man's ultimate end is natural to him if considered as "object of inclination", but supernatural if considered as "object of attainment".¹⁹⁸ He has to be "gradually disposed" to it; this takes place through the revelation, by sanctifying grace, of a certain, still imperfect, supernatural knowledge. Scotus also answers the objection concerning the relative 'nobility' of rational and irrational natures addressed earlier by Thomas (pp.30-1 above): "This vilifies nature, that it cannot pursue its perfection by its natural powers", to which Scotus replies:

In this, nature is more dignified than if the supreme (happiness) possible to it were placed in it naturally; nor is it any wonder that there be in a certain

¹⁹⁷ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, Prologue, I, n.49, (Vat.I, 30); de Lubac, trans., *Mystery*, 85, n.34, my parenthesis.

¹⁹⁸ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, Prologue, I, n.57, Vat.I, 35).

nature a passive capacity to perfection greater than that to which its active causality extends.¹⁹⁹

However, this inequality between its “purely natural” (non-graced) possibilities and its possibilities as *capax Dei* entails that our nature is not naturally knowable to us. In a question on the necessity of divine revelation, Scotus says:

They [“the philosophers”] accept that our nature, or our intellectual potency, is naturally knowable to us; this is false, under the very and specific rule (*ratio*) under which it is ordered to such an end, is completely capable of grace, and has God as the most perfect object. In fact, our soul is not known to us, nor is our nature in its present condition, except under some general rule that is beyond the reach of the senses.²⁰⁰

Thomas says the same thing concerning natural knowledge of the final end, that “it is not fitting that it be first in the knowledge of the human mind, which is ordered to the end”, but rather in the knowledge of the ordainer.²⁰¹ Man, therefore, needs revelation in order to know distinctly what is his last end.

Scotus: Being as Perfection

Although we do not find in Scotus a statement such as Thomas’s “I call essence (*essentia*) that whose actuality is being (*esse*)”,²⁰² Scotus’s account of finality shows clearly that he does identify perfection with the “highest being”, meaning God, identified now as the fulfilment of the finite’s desire for the infinite:

It is impossible for potency to be perfectly quieted except in what is best, in which the essence of its object (*ratio obiecti sui*) is saved. But the whole being (*totum ens*) is an object by reason (*sub ratione*) of good will, and by reason of true intellect. Therefore the intellect and the will are quieted only when their object is in the height of its perfection. But in no finite thing can it be in its highest perfection. Therefore, only in the Infinite”.²⁰³

As with Thomas (above, p.25), Scotus identifies the soul’s perfection with an operation or activity, which is its goal and is identified with happiness:

¹⁹⁹ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, Prologue, I, n.75, (*Vat.*I, 45-6), de Lubac, trans., *Mystery*, 155, n.77.

²⁰⁰ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, Prol., p.1, q.un., (*Vat.*I, 17), de Lubac, trans., *Mystery*, 211.

²⁰¹ Aquinas, *In Boetium de Trinitate*, q.1, a.3, ad.4, (*Leo.*L, 88).

²⁰² Aquinas, *Sent.*I, d.23, q.1, a.1, (Mandonnet, ptbi); cf. *ST.*la.3.4c, (*Leo.*IV, 42).

²⁰³ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, IV, d.1, q.6, n.5, (Olms-Wadding, VIII,), de Lubac, *Mystery*, trans., 192, n.27.

Also there are many citations from authority about happiness as the ultimate and most desirable end, whether they make it consist in knowledge (as in that text from Augustine that “vision is the whole reward”²⁰⁴), or in love (according to his statement that “The supreme reward is our enjoyment of him”²⁰⁵). All these agree at least in this, that the last and most desirable end is an activity or consists in an operation.²⁰⁶

Again, as with Thomas (above, p.20), desire for the final end does not entail having to be always thinking of it:

But the ultimate perfection of the living nature is what such a nature desires above all else by natural desire. Augustine’s words can be understood as referring to such desire when he declares: “We all want to be happy”²⁰⁷. This is always true whether we actually think of beatitude or not, and yet without actual knowledge we can have no actual volition.²⁰⁸

Scotus: Universals and Nature: (i) The Formal Distinction

Both in the matter of universals and in his doctrine of formal entities, Scotus was a realist. His realism, however, did not run to acceptance of the traditional Franciscan “plurality of forms”, postulating, as it did, a real composition or distinction of forms in the human make-up.²⁰⁹ Scotus simplified it by positing a “formal”, rather than real, distinction between them. His doctrine of “formal distinction” made use of a concept already known to the thirteenth century: that of a type of distinction intermediate between the real distinction existing among individuals in the extra-mental world, and the purely mental type of distinction created by the mind. Thomas had referred to it as a distinction arising “not merely by reason of the one conceiving it but in virtue of a property of the thing itself”.²¹⁰ The distinction is in some sense real. Scotus also calls it a “virtual

²⁰⁴ Augustine, *De Trinitate*, XIII, n.31, (PL.42,844).

²⁰⁵ Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, I.32.n.5, (PL.34,32).

²⁰⁶ Scotus, *Quodlibet*, XIII, a.1.4, (Olms-Wadding, XII,302), Alluntis,286,13.11.

²⁰⁷ Augustine, *De Trinitate*, XIII, c.4, n.7, (PL.42,1018-9).

²⁰⁸ Scotus, *Quodlibet*, XIII, a.1.3, (Olms-Wadding, XII,302), Alluntis,285,13.9.

²⁰⁹ i.e. the body having its own *forma corporeitatis*, and the soul its own “spiritual matter”.

²¹⁰ Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, d.2, q.1, a.2, (Mandonnet, I,62).

distinction", since what is involved is not really two things, but "one thing which is virtually or pre-eminently, as it were, two realities".²¹¹

At the same time, because he does not accept the real composition of essence and existence in creatures,²¹² Scotus can attribute several formal entities to any being without disrupting its actual unity. This is seen first and foremost in the Deity. Although all the divine attributes, because they share in God's infinity, are one, there is in God at least a virtual foundation for the distinction we posit between them. This applies, in the first place, to the distinction between the intellect of God and his will. The distinguishing role vis-à-vis God and creatures played in Thomism by the existential purity of the divine Act of Being, is played in Scotism by the divine will.

In Scotus, finite being is finite in virtue of the composition of matter and form only, and not, as in Thomas, the composition of being and essence also. In virtue of the formal distinction, the plurality of forms in all sensible creatures, including man, in no way threatens the unity of being of each.²¹³ However, although he will not add an act of being to the existent (i.e. to the existent as an essence), Scotus does add an individuating principle, an "individual difference" to the form to constitute its singularity. This he also terms its *haecceitas*: "haecceity" or "thisness". The purpose of the *haecceitas* is to preserve the uniqueness of the individual, so that a formal distinction can be made between the essence or nature as individuated, and the essence or nature as common, without losing all unity in the nature. The resulting unity of the common nature is a less-than-individual unity. Scotus calls it *unitas minor*.

²¹¹ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 2, nn. 399-407, (Vatican, II, 355-6).

²¹² Scotus, *Ordinatio*, IV, d. 11, q. 3, n. 46, (Olms-Wadding, VIII, 649).

²¹³ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, IV, d. 11, q. 3, n. 47, (Olms-Wadding, VIII, 649).

(ii) Common Nature

All form is common to the individuals of one species. This is the nature *absolute sumpta*, as abstracted from all singularity and universality. Scotus calls it the “common nature”, in relation to which, the *haecceity* is not an added form, but the ultimate reality of the form. It is an “ultimate difference” of formal being.²¹⁴ At the same time, it is indifferent, in itself, to both existence and non-existence. In created things, it is the ultimate determination and actuality which perfects their being.

Scotus’ noetic makes a clear distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition, as well as between the roles of the active and passive intellects. The proper object of intuitive cognition is the existing singular perceived as existing, and of abstractive cognition, the quiddity or essence of the known thing.²¹⁵ Intellective cognition has to do with universals: a “representative image”, endowed with actual existence, of the intelligible species, i.e., the universal *qua* universal, is produced by the agent intellect. Received in the possible intellect, it causes intellection.²¹⁶ Scotus firmly maintains the reliability of sense knowledge, as against Henry of Ghent.²¹⁷

The *locus* of the real in Scotus is the essence as abstracted by the intellect from its objects. It is neither pure universality nor pure individuality, but, as the intrinsic indetermination of essence, it is the metaphysical ground of both.

²¹⁴ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, II, d. 3, q. 6, (*Vatican*, VII, 463-494).

²¹⁵ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, II, d. 3, p. 2, q. 2, n. 6, (*Vatican*, VII, 553).

²¹⁶ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 3, q. 1, n. 8, (*Vatican*, III, 217-220).

²¹⁷ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 4, a. 5, (*Vatican*, III, 133-4).

Consequently, for Scotus, the “common nature” of a thing has a kind of real being, based on the “formal distinction” of attributes. For the most part, like Thomas, he does not equate “nature” with “universal”, though, like Thomas, he allows the use of the term “universal” to designate the nature taken absolutely, as abstracted from all reality:

In the first way, nature taken absolutely is called ‘universal’, because it is not, of itself, a “this”, and therefore does not, of itself, preclude being used of many. In the second way, it is not universal, except in the sense of an indeterminate act, such that an identical name can be given to each *suppositum*, and in that sense, it is truly universal.²¹⁸

In general, in Scotus, “common nature” is contrasted with singularity and universality, both of which are accidental to it. It is neither singular nor plural: not singular because it does not have the specific unity of an individual as individual. However, Scotus does assign to it a lesser but real unity, based on Aristotle:²¹⁹ The *unitas minor* is never found in reality apart from the existent individuals. In any individual, the nature has a two-fold unity: that which belongs to the individual as individual, as well as the lesser unity that belongs to the nature in itself. For Scotus, the difference in the nature as it is found in different individuals is not at all incompatible with the *unitas minor* that embraces all human nature whatever, and which constitutes a really existent unity outside the intellect. Therefore, “the community of nature is a real community outside the mind, and is the real foundation of all universal predication and scientific knowledge”.²²⁰ Without a proper being and unity of the nature in itself, there could be no community of nature. As it is, it has enough being of its own to be the source of true quidditative propositions, since truth, like unity, is a transcendent attribute of being.

²¹⁸ Scotus, *Q. in Metaph.* VII, 18, n. 6, (Olms-Wadding, IV, 723).

²¹⁹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, X, 1 (1052b 18-24).

²²⁰ Joseph Owens, *Common Nature: A Point of Comparison Between Thomistic and Scotistic Metaphysics*, *Mediaeval Studies* 19, 1957, 1-14, 10.

Because it has a proper being of its own, the Scotistic common nature, unlike the Thomistic, cannot be predicated of individuals. Predication involves complete identity in reality, where one can say, in Scotistic terms, *hoc est hoc*. Consequently, only Thomas's *natura absolute considerata*, abstracted from all being without precision, can be predicated of all individuals as a universal. However, Scotus's 'formal distinction' allows him to attribute the common nature to individuals without either predication or loss of unity:

Thus whatever is common and yet determinable can still be distinguished (no matter how much it is one thing) into several formally distinct realities of which this one is not formally that one. This one is formally the entity of singularity, and that one is formally the entity of the nature.²²¹

For Scotus, as previously stated, the common nature is prior in being to either universality or singularity. Therefore the nature is not of itself a universal, but universality accrues to it accidentally.²²² In Scotus' view, to equate the two would amount to fundamental confusion of the logical and metaphysical realms. The common nature is more properly the metaphysical ground of the universal.

Universal predicability does not *necessarily* entail a common essence in reality. Scotus makes this claim only for predicables that are absolute terms: this on the basis of the medieval distinction between absolute and connotative terms. An absolute term denotes reality outside the mind, for instance, "human being", "tree", "water". Connotative terms denote real things only indirectly, relatively or negatively, in virtue of some accidental quality, for example, "father", "carpenter", "drunkard". As a logical universal (i.e., in the mind),

²²¹ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 6, (Vatican, VII, 484), Paul Vincent Spade ed. and trans., *Five Texts on the Mediaeval Problem of Universals*, Indianapolis/Cambridge, Hackett Publishing Co., 1994, 107.

²²² *Ordinatio*, II, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1, n. 7, (Vatican, VII, 404), Spade, *Five Texts*, 64.

“human being” is predicable of all actually existing humans. But this logical universality is grounded in a metaphysically prior “humanity” as a common nature existing outside the mind. The absolute term, “human being”, therefore, has a dual universality, both logical and metaphysically-grounded. Connotative terms, on the other hand, are purely logical, and do not entail positing a common nature of “fatherhood”, “carpenterhood” etc. On this subject, A. Matteo observes that:

..Scotus, in expounding his doctrine of the common nature, was not setting out to multiply metaphysical entities with reckless abandon. He clearly recognized a whole host of purely logical universals which were solely *entia rationis*... Nonetheless, he identified another class of logical universals that referred directly to external reality. For the latter an objective grounding in reality had to be established by the first intentional science of metaphysics if our conceptualization and discourse vis-à-vis external reality were not to be reduced to a subjectivist status.²²³

In the case of Aquinas and Scotus, the divergence in their understandings of common nature is underscored by their contrasting doctrines of being and essence. For Thomas, a finite essence always remains other than any being it may possess: in itself, *absolute considerata*, it has no being at all. For Scotus, an essence in and of itself, for which he uses the term *absolute sumpta*, has a positive being of its own, on which there follows a minor unity and a formal distinction. All of this constitutes a concept entirely foreign to Thomistic philosophy. For St. Thomas, only in infinite being are nature and individuality identical, as only in God do essence and being coincide.

Scotus’s univocal concept of being, which entails a real identity of being and essence in creatures, can be seen as a *sine qua non* for his doctrine of the

²²³ Anthony M. Matteo, *Scotus and Ockham: A Dialogue on Universals*, Franciscan Studies 45, 1985, 83-96, 88.

common nature. His purpose in positing the metaphysical formality of a less-than-numerical unity (*unitas minor*), is, as he sees it, to safeguard the vital link between thought and being, lest our intellectual life be rendered unintelligible.

WILLIAM OF OCKHAM (c.1285-1347)

Ockham is a radical opponent of Scotus's realism, and uses his formidable talents as a logician to deliver it fatal blows wherever he comes up against it. Scotus's 'common nature' and 'formal distinction' are two of the principal casualties. Any suggestion of reality in universals tends to attract his attention in this way, and occupies considerable space in his works. At the same time, he is deeply indebted to Scotus on a number of important counts, notably, the distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition²²⁴ (Thomas and Bonaventure dealt with abstractive alone), and the distinction between absolute and connotative terms.²²⁵ As we will see in chapter 2, he also shares Scotus's passionate concern for divine and human freedom, and carries the concern to new lengths.

Ockham: Being and Essence

Thomas, as we have seen, had added to the Aristotelian distinction of matter and form in a substance the additional distinction between its act of being and its essence (*esse et essentia*), or between 'a being' (*ens*) and its essence (*essentia*). Ockham, who was far from being alone in wishing to refute the notion, almost invariably speaks of it as a distinction between 'two things' (*duae res*):

²²⁴ See pp.69-70 below.

²²⁵ See pp.60 above, 247 below.

..we shall...consider how the existence ('*esse existere*') of a thing is related to the thing, i.e., whether the existence of a thing and its essence are two entities extra-mentally distinct from each other.²²⁶

If they were distinct, the existence of a thing would be either a substance or an accident. If an accident, "the existence of a man would be a quality or a quantity, which is manifestly false". Neither can it be a substance, because

every substance is either matter or form, or a composition of matter and form, or a separated substance. But it is manifest that none of these can be called the existence (*esse*) of a thing, if existence is a thing distinct from the essence (*entitas*) of the thing itself.²²⁷

He also brings to bear on the subject his own favoured metaphysical 'trump card', the separability by divine absolute power of all real 'things': if existence and essence were really distinct in a thing, God would be able to preserve either one without the other, which is impossible. He concludes, using his own terminology:

We have to say, therefore, that essence (*entitas*) and existence (*existentia*) are not two things. On the contrary, the words 'thing' (*res*) and 'to be' (*esse*) signify one and the same thing, but the one in the manner of a noun and the other in the manner of a verb.²²⁸ For that reason, the one cannot be suitably substituted for the other, because they do not have the same function.²²⁹

The distinction is semantic, not real or metaphysical.

Ockham: The Concept of Univocity

Where Thomas sees the difference in mode of being between God and creatures as requiring the analogical mode of predication,²³⁰ Ockham finds nothing in the notion of 'analogy' that is not adequately covered by univocal,

²²⁶ Ockham, *SL III-2.27, Philos I, 553*); Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M., trans: *Ockham, Philosophical Writings*, Indianapolis, Hackett, 1990, 92.

²²⁷ Ockham, *SL III-2.27, (Philos. I, 553)*, Boehner, trans., 93.

²²⁸ Cf. *Quodlibet*, II.7, (*Theol. IX, 143-144*), Freddoso, 119-122.

²²⁹ Ockham, *SL III-2.27, (Philos. I, 554)*, Boehner, trans., 93.

²³⁰ Aquinas, *SCG. I, 32-34, (Leo. XIII, 97-104)*.

equivocal or denominative predication.²³¹ 'Being' as such, by itself, is, in any case, only a concept, which can be predicated univocally *in quid* of God and of all creatures.²³² The essence of each is as unique and singular as the individual. 'Being' may be predicated *in quid* of all created things, including the ultimate differences and proper attributes of which Scotus makes an exception.²³³ A univocal concept can even be common to things that have no likeness, either substantial or accidental. It is in this sense only that concepts can be predicated univocally of God and creatures; for nothing essential to God is of the same *ratio*²³⁴ as anything essential to a creature.

Ockham observes that, "The *name* 'being' is *equivocal*". This is because "it is not predicated according to one *concept* of all [names] that are capable of being subjects, taken significatively. Instead, diverse concepts correspond to this name...".²³⁵ The diversity of concepts Ockham has in mind here are those signified by absolute and connotative terms respectively, even though, according to Ockham's ontology, connotative terms do not signify entities distinct from those signified by their associated absolute terms in the categories of substance and quality.²³⁶ Ockham continues:

However, I do claim that the *concept* 'being' is univocal to God and all other things. This is evident from the fact that everyone concedes that we have some sort of noncomplex cognition of God. Then I ask: do we know God in himself and under a proper notion of the divine nature by means of a cognition that is proper, simple, absolute and affirmative? And it is not true that we know God in this way²³⁷... either by means of an intuitive cognition

²³¹ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, IV.12, (*Theol.* IX, 352-359), Freddoso, 292-298.

²³² Ockham, *Quodlibet*, V.14, (*Theol.* IX, 536-8), Freddoso, 448-450.

²³³ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, I, d.2, q.9, (*Theol.* II, 300).

²³⁴ The Latin word *ratio*, frequent in scholastic usage, I will let stand, as it has no precise English equivalent. It approximates to 'rationale', 'reason', 'meaning' or 'understanding'.

²³⁵ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, V.14, (*Theol.* IX, 537), Freddoso & Kelley, trans., 449, my emphases.

²³⁶ Ockham, *Expositio in Librum Porphyrii de Praedicabilibus*, II, n.10, (*Philos.* II, 41-44).

²³⁷ Cf. *Quodlibets*, IV.17 and V.7.

or by means of an abstractive cognition. Or do we rather know God, not in himself as he is, but instead in some concept?²³⁸

He goes on to show that “some concept is common to God and all other things”, and that it “can be correctly predicated of them... univocally”.²³⁹ The concept in question is ‘being’. However, it is precisely as a *concept* that ‘being’ can be so predicated. For Ockham, ‘being’ is *only* a concept. It has no reality whatever distinct from individual things. The *locus* of all reality is the *singular existing thing (res)*.

Ockham on Nature:

Against Scotus’s Formal Distinction and Common Nature

Ockham’s rejection of the Scotistic formal distinction evidently ranks high on the list of ‘pivotal moments’ in the history of Western thought. According to one commentator:

It is scarcely an exaggeration to assert that if one wished to select a single cardinal point on which the whole history of western thought turned, then the Scotistic *distinctio formalis a parte rei*...would be a most prominent candidate for selection. Ockhamism is, to a large extent, a reaction against it, and in the absence of such a reaction the total complexion and subsequent history of European philosophy, logic and theology would have been quite other than in fact it has been.²⁴⁰

Maurer, too, comments on the importance of this ‘moment’ for Ockham’s own thinking, describing it as “a milestone in reaching his (Ockham’s) own nominalist position. Indeed, the method itself by which he refutes Scotus leads him inexorably to his position”.²⁴¹ The formal distinction is, indeed, entirely incompatible with the *radical singularity of real entities* which dominates Ockham’s metaphysics. In his *Ordinatio*, he describes Scotus’s theory as follows:

²³⁸ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, V.14, (*Theol.* IX, 538), Freddoso, 449.

²³⁹ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, V.14, (*Theol.* IX, 538), Freddoso, 450.

²⁴⁰ DP. Henry, *Medieval Logic and Metaphysics*, London, Hutchinson University Library, 1972, 89.

²⁴¹ Armand Maurer, *Method in Ockham’s Nominalism*, *The Monist* 61, 1978, 432.

On this question it is said that in a thing outside the soul there is a nature really the same as a difference that contracts it to a determinate individual, and yet *formally distinct from that difference*. This nature is of itself neither universal nor particular. Rather it is incompletely universal in the thing, and completely universal according to the being it has in the intellect.²⁴²

He goes on to attribute this theory to “the Subtle Doctor, who surpasses all others in the subtlety of his judgment”, and to refute it at considerable length.

Ockham, the logician, makes full use of syllogisms to reinforce his arguments, for, as he says in the *Ordinatio*, “syllogistic form holds equally for every subject matter”.²⁴³ The ‘formal distinction’ lends itself only too well to dismissal by this mode of argument:

I prove my premise by the following syllogism: the nature is not formally distinct from itself; this individual difference is formally distinct from this nature; therefore, this individual difference is not this nature.²⁴⁴

Similarly effective is the ‘principle of contradiction’ (or ‘of noncontradiction’)

itself, for “contradiction is the strongest way to prove the distinction of things”:

For if a nature and the contracting difference are not the same in all respects, then something can be truly affirmed of the one and denied of the other. But among creatures the same thing cannot be truly affirmed and truly denied of the same thing. Therefore, they are not one thing.²⁴⁵

The common nature, whose real existence Scotus maintains, is the metaphysical ground of both the universality, which exists in the mind only, and of the singularity, which is the nature as contracted to individuals by an individual difference formally distinct from the nature as such. In the same question, he says:

Just as a nature, according to its being, is not *of itself* universal, but rather universality is *accidental* to the nature according to its primary aspect according to which it is an object, so too in the external thing where the nature is together with singularity, the nature is not *of itself* determined to singularity but is naturally prior to the aspect that contracts to that

²⁴² Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.2,q.6,(Theol.II,161), Spade ed.,*Five Texts*,153,my emphasis.

²⁴³ Ockham, *Ordinatio*,d.2,q.6,(*Theol*.II,174), Spade ed., *Five Texts*,156.

²⁴⁴ Ockham, *SL*.I.16,(*Philos*.I,54), Loux,trans.,82.

²⁴⁵ Ockham, *Ordinatio*,d.2,q.6,(*Theol*.II,173-4). Spade,ed.,*Five Texts*,156.

singularity. And insofar as it is naturally prior to that contracting aspect, it is not incompatible with it to be without that contracting aspect.²⁴⁶

Therefore, universality is accidental to the common nature, and singularity is posterior to it. The nature as naturally prior, and as metaphysical ground, Scotus describes as “formally one by numerical unity”: i.e., with a numerical unity of its own formally distinct from the less-than-numerical unity of the nature considered in its contractible aspect. This is the “proper unity that follows on the nature as a nature”: that is, the nature which, for Scotus, has a real existence outside the mind. Scotus can still claim, therefore, that everything outside the mind is, of itself, really singular.²⁴⁷

One of the main thrusts of Ockham’s critique of the formal distinction is directed against the notion that individuality and unity accrue to a thing by the addition to its specific nature of a real individual difference formally distinct from it. In accordance with his ontological principle that “to be the same and to be diverse follow immediately on being”, he cites Aristotle and Averroes to the effect that “every being is one through its essence and not through anything added...Likewise, if the nature is numerically one then it is not common”.²⁴⁸

Finally, he concludes:

..it is clear that a nature of a stone is of itself “this”, and so a nature of a stone cannot be in anything else... Nevertheless you should know that literally ‘A nature of a stone is in a stone’ is false. Instead it should be granted that a nature of a stone is a stone. (Yet in the case of Christ it can be granted that a human nature is in Christ)... But if it is understood that a nature of a stone is truly in a stone, as in something distinct in any way, then that is absolutely false. If however it is understood that the nature is the stone then it is true.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁶ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, II, d.3, p.1, q.1, (*Vat.* VII, 404), Spade, 64, my emphases.

²⁴⁷ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, II, d.3, q.1, n.7, (*Vat.* VII, 404), Spade 64.

²⁴⁸ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.2, q.6, (*Theol.* II, 185), Spade, 163-4.

²⁴⁹ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.2, q.6, (*Theol.* II, 224), Spade, 189-190.

For Ockham, it is a central tenet of his whole system that the word ‘thing’ can always and only denote the singular:

Everything really universal, whether it is completely universal or not, is really common to several things, or at least is able to be common to several things. But no thing is really common to several things. Therefore, no thing is in any way universal. The major is plain, because a universal is distinguished from a singular by the fact that the singular is determined to one while the universal is indifferent to many, in the manner in which it is universal. The minor is also plain, because no really singular thing is common to several things. But everything, according to them [Scotus’ adherents], is really singular.²⁵⁰

In a question concerning the reality, or otherwise, of universals outside the mind, Ockham says:

Others hold that a thing according to its actual being is singular. The same thing according to its being in the intellect is universal. Thus the same thing according to one being or according to one consideration is universal, and according to another being or according to another consideration is singular.²⁵¹

Maurer is of the opinion that the “others” mentioned here include Thomas, and that a passage from his *De Ente et Essentia* is being referred to, in which he treats of human nature *absolute considerata*, i.e., as a universal:

If someone should ask, then, whether a nature understood in this way can be called one or many, we should reply that it is neither, because both are outside the concept of humanity, and it can happen to be both. If plurality belonged to its concept, it could never be one, though it is one when present in Socrates. So, too, if oneness belonged to its concept, the nature of Socrates and of Plato would be identical, and it could not be multiplied in many individuals.²⁵²

For Ockham, a nature is not multiplied in many individuals, but is singular and unique in each individual. Beyond that, it is only a name, conventionally attached to things on the basis of perceived similarities. Maurer observes that “Ockham couches the doctrine of universals in his own language of things (*res*) instead of Thomas’ language of essences or natures”,²⁵³ and that his criticism of Thomas’s account “does not come to grips with its metaphysical notions of a

²⁵⁰ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.2, q.6, (*Theol.* II, 179-80), Spade, 160.

²⁵¹ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.2, q.7, (*Theol.* II, 227), Spade, 191.

²⁵² Aquinas, *De Ente et Essentia* III, 2, Armand Maurer, trans., Toronto, 1968, 46.

²⁵³ Armand Maurer, *The Philosophy of William of Ockham in the Light of its Principles*, 79.

nature and its possible ways of existing".²⁵⁴ In Ockham's account, a nature has only one way of existing: as a singular identical with its subject:

Therefore, if the thing that really is singular is universal according to its being in the intellect, which is not possible except because of an act of intellection, then any thing that can be understood can likewise be universal in the same way. So Socrates can be universal and common to Plato according to his being in the intellect. Likewise, the divine essence according to its being in the intellect will be universal, even though according to its real being in act it is most singular. All these results are absurd.²⁵⁵

Ockham's Epistemology: Intuitive and Abstractive Cognition

In the Prologue to Ockham's *Ordinatio*,²⁵⁶ two kinds of intellectual act are described: apprehension and judgment:

..an act of apprehension...relates to everything that can be the term of an act of the intellectual power, whether this be something complex or non-complex. For we apprehend not only that which is non-complex, but also propositions and demonstrations, and impossibilities and necessities, and, in general, anything within the scope of the intellectual power.²⁵⁷

Acts of non-complex apprehension (only) are called intuitive. "Intuitive cognition of a thing is cognition that enables us to know whether the thing exists or does not exist".²⁵⁸ There are two types of intuition: sensory and intellectual. Sensory intuition gives immediate knowledge of an object present to the knower, by the senses. Abstractive knowledge does not enable us to know whether a thing actually exists or not: "In this way abstractive cognition abstracts from existence and non-existence".²⁵⁹ Empirical knowledge comes only from intuition. However, God, by means of his liberty and *potentia absoluta*, is able to dispense with the necessity of secondary causes for producing intuitive knowledge. God can cause intuitive knowledge of non-existent objects. The first

²⁵⁴ Armand Maurer, *The Philosophy*, 80.

²⁵⁵ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.2, q.7, (*Theol.* II, 241), Spade, 199.

²⁵⁶ Ockham's *Ordinatio* comprises only his commentary on Book I of the Sentences: Books II-IV, identified by me as *Sent.* II, *Sent.* III etc, are *Reportatio*, i.e. unrevised by him.

²⁵⁷ Ockham, *Ordinatio* I, Prol., q.1; Boehner trans., 18.

²⁵⁸ Boehner, trans., *Ockham*, 23.

²⁵⁹ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, Prol., q.1, (*Theol.* I, 32), Boehner, trans., 23.

argument he gives for this possibility reflects Ockham's propensity for making radical separations between, and among, acts and objects, in the interests of Divine freedom and absolute power:

Vision is a non-relative quality distinct from the object; without contradiction, therefore, it can occur without an object...Intuitive cognition of a non-existent object is possible by the divine power...Every effect which God can produce by means of a secondary cause He can produce directly on his own account.²⁶⁰

Ockham's attitude towards secondary causality and causal chains in general can be gauged from this. It stems from the fact that, for Ockham, only singulars can be intuited, whether the singulars in question are objects or acts.

Aquinas's account of perception is based on the agent intellect's abstraction of the universal, i.e. the species, from the phantasm. The material object is received, first by the medium, then by the senses, then by the *phantasia*, a cognitive power of imagination which produces phantasms. The latter are described by Thomas as "actual images of certain species (which) are immaterial in potentiality".²⁶¹ The process to this point takes place unconsciously on the part of the seer. After abstracting the universal, the agent intellect then consciously initiates causal activity in interior judgment, forming "concepts", and in exterior acts. In this way, the noncomplex which is the material object becomes an element in the cognition of a complex notion, or proposition.

The version of this "species account" of cognition inherited, or at least assumed, by Ockham, leads him to contradict it on a number of counts, and

²⁶⁰ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, VI.6, (*Theol.* IX, 604-5), Boehner, trans., 25.

²⁶¹ Aquinas, *ST.* Ia. 79.4 ad. 4, (*Leo.* V. 268).

reject it. However, in doing so, he reveals that the version he takes to be Thomas's is not Thomas's at all.²⁶² Ockham's own account has for its foundation the distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition, which dates from after Thomas's time. Ockham sees it as simpler, and directs his 'razor' against the species account: we should not do with more entities what can be done with fewer.²⁶³ Stump remarks that it certainly *appears* simpler, "because it seems to posit nothing more in its account of human cognition than the thing cognized and the cognizer".²⁶⁴ This accords with conscious experience as Ockham sees it: "I say that a thing is seen or apprehended immediately, without any intermediary between itself and the [cognitive] act".²⁶⁵

Unlike Aquinas, Ockham does not think that what the intellect acquires first or primarily is a universal. The material object acts on the senses with efficient causation to produce an intuitive cognition of it in the senses.²⁶⁶ Next, the intuitive cognition in the senses causes an intuitive cognition in the intellect.²⁶⁷ Both intuitive cognitions are of the same object, so there is no phantasm as in the species account:

..that very same singular which is sensed first by the sense is itself, under the same description, intellectually cognized first with intuitive cognition by the intellect.²⁶⁸

The same material thing can be the object of abstractive cognition also, as when it is recalled by the memory in its absence. Similarly, the apprehension of

²⁶² An account of the differences between Ockham's and Thomas's theories of cognition will be found in Eleonore Stump, *The Mechanisms of Cognition, Ockham on Mediating Species* in Paul Vincent Spade, ed., *Cambridge Companion to Ockham*, CUP, 1999, 168-203.

²⁶³ Ockham, *Sent.* II, q. 13, (*Theol.* V, 268); *Sent.* III, q. 2 (*Theol.* VI, 59).

²⁶⁴ Stump, *Mechanisms*, 182.

²⁶⁵ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d. 27, q. 3, (*Theol.* IV, 241); *Sent.* III, q. 3, (*Theol.* VI, 121).

²⁶⁶ Ockham, *Sent.* II, q. 13, (*Theol.* V, 276).

²⁶⁷ Ockham, *Sent.* III, q. 2, (*Theol.* VI, 65).

²⁶⁸ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d. 3, q. 6, (*Theol.* II, 494).

universals takes place by abstraction after the intuitive cognition on which it relies. The faculties of memory and imagination, which for Thomas are the *locus* of the storage or retention of species, Ockham sees as adequately explained in terms of habit.²⁶⁹

For Aquinas, to perceive an object is to perceive it *as*. The universal as abstracted is the object of an act of perception. For Ockham, perception is essentially an act of intuition, and intuition concerns the existence, not the essence, of an object. He goes so far as to say that:

..the distinct knowledge of a singular does not necessarily require distinct knowledge of any universal...a thing can be distinctly cognized without [the cognition of] its defining characteristic.²⁷⁰

The state of the intellect is externally caused by what the object and the senses impress upon it; and this happens in such a way that any subsequent act of judgment concerning the real existence or non-existence of the object cannot be false. Here is surely the foundation of Ockham's philosophic empiricism. He drives home the point by saying that even God, if He chooses to give an intuition of a non-existent object, cannot give it so as to lead to a false judgment concerning that non-existence.²⁷¹

Ockham's theory of cognition is closely connected to his doctrine of free will. The radical 'freedom of indifference' he posits could not co-exist with an account like Aquinas's in which it is the intellect that freely initiates a chain of causation vis-à-vis the phantasms and the will. For Thomas, once the intellect

²⁶⁹ Ockham, *Sent.* II, q. 13, (*Theol.* V, 271-2).

²⁷⁰ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d. 3, q. 6, (*Theol.* II, 521, 523).

²⁷¹ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, V. 5, (*Theol.* IX, 498), Freddoso, 415.

has judged an action to be 'good', in whatever sense – justified or deficient – it is not possible for the will to decide otherwise or to act against it. Thomistic freedom is not, like Ockham's, indifferent to the real and ultimate good, the true finality of man, which Ockham declines to recognise as having any bearing on freedom. On freedom and natural finality, more will be said in chapter 2.

As for Thomas, so for Ockham, knowledge begins with sense-experience; but there the similarity ends. For Ockham, empirical knowledge is the only certain knowledge outside the realm of faith, and empirical knowledge comes only from intuition, never from abstraction. Thomist and Scotist metaphysics are alike eliminated. All certain, empirical knowledge is described as "*notitia scientifica...accepta per experientiam*".²⁷² In this context, Ockham sets great store by "experience". The epistemological gulf thus created between the realm of sense-knowledge and the realm of faith is designed to safeguard divine freedom as Ockham interprets it.

Ockham on Universals: The Divine Ideas

Ockham's own understanding of the universal can be gauged from his doctrine of the Divine Ideas. According to Aquinas and Scotus, the ideas are the divine essence as imitable outside itself. Just as creatures differ really and in varying degrees from each other, so the ideas can be rationally distinguished from the divine essence and from each other, as *entia rationis*. Ockham rejects this as an impossibility, since it would make the divine knowledge dependent on realities rationally distinct from itself, or on creatures, whether they are real or

²⁷² Ockham, *Ordinatio*, Prol., q.1, (*Theol.* I, 33), Boehner ed., *Ockham*, 24.

only beings of reason. It would also threaten the divine unity. The ideas would also imply an intelligible pre-existence of the creature, casting doubt on creation *ex nihilo*. Therefore the ideas have no place in the Divine Essence. The idea of a creature in God can only be the creature itself, known directly, perfectly and individually by God, and as a singular, not a species, because only singulars are knowable:

The ideas are not in God subjectively and really but they are in Him only objectively as certain things known by Him, because the ideas are the things themselves as producible by God... Furthermore, the ideas are only of singulars and not of species because singulars are precisely what are knowable.²⁷³

The function of the Ideas is to signify the creature directly, and indirectly its producibility by God. As far as its ultimate nature is concerned, an Idea is merely a connotative term or concept. It is not, as Ockham's predecessors had taught or implied, a *quid rei*.

What has clearly been discarded by Ockham is the notion of the ideas as God's knowledge of his own essence as imitable. For him, the necessary character of the divine essence must evidently impose some sort of necessity upon the act of creation, either with regard to the act itself (whether to create or not), or with regard to what is created. However, a similar notion appears in Ockham's account of the divine attributes:

Secondly I say that attributable perfections are only certain concepts or signs which are able to be predicated of God, and more appropriately they should be called attributable concepts or names than attributable perfections, because properly speaking a perfection is always something and these concepts are not properly things, nor are they simply perfections.²⁷⁴

²⁷³ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.35, q.5, (*Theol.* IV, 497), H.R.Klocker, *Ockham and the Divine Freedom*, Franciscan Studies, 45, 1985, 245-261, 254.

²⁷⁴ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.2, q.2, (*Theol.* II, 61), Klocker, 254.

Here the words, “only...concepts or names” (*non sunt nisi...conceptus vel nomina*) are indicative of the direction in which Ockham’s whole project is moving. The ideas, along with the divine attributes, have been removed from the metaphysical sphere and transferred to the logical, by means of his own distinctive use of absolute and connotative terms. However, the divine attributes are predicable of God, whereas the ideas are not:

Fourthly I say that...the ideas are not distinguished in God as attributes because the ideas in God are the things themselves as producible by God. Nor are they predicated of God really as the attributes are truly predicated of God.²⁷⁵

The ideas do not signify something in God but signify only the creature as creatable, and indeed as eternally creatable. This leaves creation free and *ex nihilo* without affecting the divine simplicity or unity. It also leaves God entirely free from any trace or suggestion of Greek determinism. The Idea is a finite reality grounded in divine free choice and not in any absolute and necessary divine intelligibility, grounded in the nature of God Himself. Furthermore, God wills only singulars, each independently of all the others. Any historical connections between them are entirely contingent and likewise the result of the divine creative will.

What is entirely absent from this picture is any basis for the creature’s producibility other than the divine free will. The divine Being or essence as imitable does not enter the picture, for the reason that it cannot be identified with multiplicity: “But the divine essence is one, and in no way multipliable; therefore it is not itself an idea”.²⁷⁶ Aquinas does not see this as a problem:

²⁷⁵ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.2, q.2, (*Theol.* II, 71), Klocker, 255.

²⁷⁶ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.35, q.5, (*Theol.* IV, 487), my trans.: *sed essentia divina est unica, nullo modo plurificabilis; ideo ipsa non est idea.*

The divine essence is not called an idea insofar as it is that essence, but only insofar as it is the likeness or type of this or that thing. Hence ideas are said to be many, inasmuch as many types are understood through the self-same essence.²⁷⁷

The divine essence is not multiplied by being the likeness of, and therefore imitable by, many things. The latter, for Aquinas, is precisely the basis of the communicability and diffusibility of the divine goodness. What Ockham *seems* to be implying is that any such necessary likeness to his own essence or goodness must place an inadmissible restriction on God's freedom in creating. More will be said concerning Ockham's doctrine of divine freedom in chapter 2.

A universal, for Ockham, is itself a singular: it is a singular sign pointing out a plurality. Its universality lies not in its being, but in its signification only. There are natural universals and conventional universals. What Ockham here understands by 'natural' has little or nothing in common with the meaning of the term in Aquinas or Scotus. It signifies merely a thought-object reproducing in the mind an actual object outside the mind:

I maintain that a universal is not something real that exists in a subject [of inherence], either inside or outside the mind, but that it has being only as a thought-object in the mind. It is a kind of mental picture (*fictum*) which as a thought-object has a being similar to that which the thing outside the mind has in its real existence.²⁷⁸

These are called 'natural' universals because the intellectual act involved, by its nature, stands for the actual things outside the mind, or for other things in the mind. In no case does it stand for anything not singular in itself. The words used to signify them, which, for the same object, will be different in different languages, are 'conventional' universals. The manner in which these thought-

²⁷⁷ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.15.2.ad.1*, (*Leo.IV*,202).

²⁷⁸ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.2, q.8, (*Theol.II*,271), Boehner, trans., 41.

objects stand for multiple singular things outside the mind is called by Ockham “a common or confused intellection”:

And this amounts to saying that such a cognition, by some kind of assimilation, bears a greater resemblance to a man than to a donkey, but does not resemble one man more than another.²⁷⁹

Ockham on Finality: “*Non Potest Demonstrari*”

Ockham’s treatment of finality displays what is clearly an over-riding concern with him, namely to establish once and for all that articles of faith are not susceptible of proof in terms of human reason. The phrase *non potest naturaliter (or sufficienter) demonstrari* tends to recur like a refrain throughout. Ockham poses the question in *Quodlibet* II, q.3 whether articles of faith can be demonstrated, and replies that “they cannot be demonstrated by a wayfarer (*viator*: person in this life) either by means of a demonstration *quia* (i.e. from an effect to its cause) or by means of a demonstration *propter quid* (i.e. from an immediate cause to its effect)”.²⁸⁰

While Aquinas appeals to the authority of Scripture and/or the Fathers to establish the truth, and supplements and illuminates their conclusions by means of his own *recta ratio*, Ockham introduces a distinction between “two ways of speaking”: one way, “according to the truth of the faith”, and another, “if I accepted no authority”.²⁸¹ The contrast between the different approaches of Aquinas and Ockham is especially clear in their respective treatments of finality. Where Thomas sees God’s causal activity as final cause as a source of

²⁷⁹ Ockham, *Expositio super librum Perihermenias* (*Philos.* II, 345-506), Boehner, trans., 45.

²⁸⁰ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, II.3, (*Theol.* IX, 117), Freddoso, 101.

²⁸¹ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, IV.1, (*Theol.* IX, 295), Freddoso, 246.

“enrichment” for the intellect to engage with, Ockham, even though he clearly believes in divine final causality “according to the truth of the faith”, yet sees the interpretation and use made of it by Thomas and others as an approach that threatens freedom and contingency, and that cannot, in any case, be proved one way or the other. It may be that Ockham believes that no serious “enrichment” or fulfilment of the relevant human powers is possible until faith and reason have gone their separate ways. If not, he does surprisingly little to stand in the way of their parting. Ockham stands at the opposite pole to his Franciscan confrère, Bonaventure, who had devoted much of his intellectual energy and output to trying to forestall any possible separation between theology and its ‘handmaid’, philosophy.

Ockham tends to reduce final causality to efficient causality wherever possible, only to inform us that “it cannot be proved by natural reason that God is an efficient cause of any effect”.²⁸² It is, therefore, no surprise to find him saying that “it cannot be sufficiently proved that every effect has a final cause”, albeit that he is saying this with the proviso “if I did not accept any authority”.²⁸³ With regard to non-rational creatures:

..it cannot be sufficiently demonstrated or known [with certitude], either through principles known *per se* or through experience, that a thing that acts by a necessity of nature acts because of a final cause fixed beforehand by a will. And this is because the action of such an agent never varies without a change either in the agent or in the patient or in something that concurs in the action. Instead, the action always follows in the same way. And so it cannot be proved that such an agent acts because of an end.²⁸⁴

Thomas's hierarchy of causality has, at least implicitly, been dismissed by Ockham as unprovable and unknowable. However, Ockham is not here

²⁸² Ockham, *Quodlibet*, II.1, (*Theol.* IX, 108), Freddoso, 93.

²⁸³ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, IV.1, (*Theol.* IX, 295), Freddoso, 246.

²⁸⁴ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, IV.2, (*Theol.* IX, 302), Freddoso, 251, parenthesis in trans.

claiming that natural agents do not have a final end: only that Aristotle's arguments to that effect do not stand up.

Aristotle had quite clearly discerned purposiveness in non-rational nature, identifying the form with the end, or "that for the sake of which".²⁸⁵ On refusal to recognise purposiveness in nature, he comments:

"When an event takes place always or for the most part [notwithstanding occasional deformed progeny etc.] it is not incidental or by chance. In natural products, the sequence is invariable, if there is no impediment. It is absurd to suppose that purpose is not present because we do not observe an agent deliberating".²⁸⁶

Thomas had certainly taken Aristotle to mean, in an unqualified sense, that "every agent acts for an end", both non-rational and rational,²⁸⁷ and that "every action and movement are for the sake of some perfection".²⁸⁸ Ockham, however, gives an entirely different interpretation of Aristotle's meaning, incorporating his own "shift to the human subject":

..I reply that the Philosopher's arguments all apply just to an agent that is able to fail and fall short without any change at all in the concurring agent [God] or the patient or the other dispositions. The only sort of agent like this is a free agent, which is able to fail and to fall short in its own action even if everything else remains the same. However, the arguments in question do not establish that other [non-rational] agents have a final cause.²⁸⁹

To the argument that, without a final cause, all agents would act by chance,

Ockham replies:

..this argument goes through for a free agent, which is no more inclined by its nature toward the one effect than toward the other. However, the argument does not go through for a natural agent, since an agent of this sort is by its nature inclined toward one determinate effect in such a way that it is not able to cause an opposite effect. This is evident in the case of fire with respect to heat.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁵ Aristotle, *Physics* II.8, (199a 30-32), Blackwell et al.trans., 128.

²⁸⁶ Aristotle, *Physics* II.8, (199b 23-27), Blackwell et al.trans., 131.

²⁸⁷ Aquinas, SCG III.2, (Leo.XIV,5-6), Bourke, 1, trans., 34.

²⁸⁸ Aquinas, SCG III.3.5, (Leo.XIV,9), Bourke, 1, trans., 39.

²⁸⁹ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, IV.1, (*Theol.* IX, 299), Freddoso, 249, my parentheses.

²⁹⁰ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, IV, 1, (*Theol.* IX, 300), Freddoso, 249.

As to the reason why “natural agents” act in one determined way only, Ockham, when “accepting no authority”, will never commit himself beyond saying that it is “because their nature necessarily requires this”,²⁹¹ or because “*apta nata sunt... si auferetur impediens*”.²⁹² In the context of faith, Ockham’s “ontology of the absolutely singular” introduces a voluntarist ruling principle into his account of nature. The apparent orderedness-to-an-end seen in nature, in the case of non-rational creatures, rests entirely on the sovereign free will and concurrence of God, who is in no way obliged to maintain things in their current order, or apparent order.

In the case of rational creatures, it rests entirely on the individual’s free choices of ends, both proximate and ultimate:

I claim that it can be evidently known through experience that God is a final cause of effects that are produced by free agents here below, since everyone experiences that he can perform his works in order to honour God, i.e., for the sake of God as a final cause.²⁹³

Similarly, speaking “according to the truth of the faith” he says: “God, who is [both] an efficient cause and an end with respect to many effects, should, at least according to right reason, always be a final cause”.²⁹⁴ The ‘right reason’ referred to here is that of the thinking subject freely choosing to act for the sake of God. The same shift to the human subject, as far as rational finality is concerned, underlies this statement from the same Quodlibetal Question, notwithstanding its ostensible Aristotelian orthodoxy:

...the causality of an end is nothing other than its being loved and desired efficaciously by an agent, so that the effect is brought about because of the thing that is loved. Hence, just as (i) the causality of matter is nothing other than its being informed by the form, and (ii) the causality of a form is nothing other than its informing the matter, so too the causality of an end is

²⁹¹ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, IV.1, (*Theol.* IX, 300), Freddoso, 249.

²⁹² Ockham, *Sent.* IV, q. 16, (*Theol.* VII, 356).

²⁹³ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, IV.2, (*Theol.* IX, 303), Freddoso, 252.

²⁹⁴ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, IV.1, (*Theol.* IX, 295), Freddoso, 246.

its being efficaciously loved and desired, so that in the absence of that love and desire the effect would not be brought about.²⁹⁵

A final cause does not, in fact, have to exist at the time its causality comes into effect, it need only be desired by the agent producing or generating it.²⁹⁶

Ockham: Beatitude and the Faculties of the Soul

The end or goal of all rational finality is the 'enjoyment' (*frui*) of God *in patria*.

Ockham describes the act of 'enjoyment', which pertains especially to the state of beatitude, as follows:

..I say that 'enjoying' has many senses. In a broad sense it means any act in which something is taken into the faculty of will for its own sake as supreme, whether it be present or absent or possessed or not possessed. In this sense, we are said to enjoy now, in this life, when we love God for himself as supreme and above all things. In another sense, it is taken strictly for the ultimate beatific act, in which the blessed are said to enjoy in heaven. We are not said to enjoy God now in that sense.²⁹⁷

This comes in a question in which it is asked whether enjoying is solely an act of the will. In his reply he quotes Augustine, that "To enjoy is to inhere in something with love for its own sake"²⁹⁸, and comments that "it pertains to the will alone to inhere in something through love".²⁹⁹ Similarly, Augustine: "We enjoy things cognized in which the pleased will finds rest".³⁰⁰ The will is the faculty associated with rest:

Again, only in an act of will is there the greatest rest. But enjoying is the act in which there is the greatest rest... because the greatest rest is in that act which is either pleasure or the direct cause of pleasure. But only an act of will is of this sort... This is confirmed because distress belongs solely to the will... Therefore, the contrary pleasure will belong solely to the will, since contraries are in the same subject.³⁰¹

²⁹⁵ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, IV.1, (*Theol.* IX, 294), Freddoso, 245.

²⁹⁶ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, IV.1, (*Theol.* IX, 298), Freddoso, 245-6.

²⁹⁷ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.1.q.2, (*Theol.* I, 396-7), *Cambridge Translations of Medieval Philosophical Texts*, Vol.2, A.S. McGraide, J. Kilcullen, M. Kempshall eds., CUP, 2001, 368.

²⁹⁸ Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* I.4. (*PL.* 34, 20).

²⁹⁹ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.1.q.2, (*Theol.* I, 396), McGraide, 368.

³⁰⁰ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.1.q.2, (*Theol.* I, 396), McGraide, 368, quoting Augustine, *De Trinitate* X.10.

³⁰¹ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.1.q.2, (*Theol.* I, 395-6), McGraide, 367-8.

In the next question of the *Ordinatio*, after locating pleasure in the will itself as subject, rather than in the act of the will, he again repeats that “every subject receptive of some contrary is receptive of the other contrary”, but in this instance defends himself firstly by means of his characteristic resort to the *potentia absoluta Dei*:

It may be said that this reasoning is not valid, because fire is receptive of heat, yet not of cold. To this it can be said that by God’s absolute power fire can receive cold.³⁰²

However, in question 2, Ockham had already told us that, “when I say that enjoying is not an act of the intellect but of will”, he is merely “conforming to the way others speak”.³⁰³ By way of clarification he tells us that

I do not mean to deny that properly speaking and in virtue of the [strict meaning of the] terms, enjoying is an act of the intellect, for as I will show elsewhere intellect and will are entirely the same [thing]. Hence whatever is in the intellect is in the will and conversely. So enjoying is in the intellect and is an act of intellect from the fact that it is an act of the will.³⁰⁴

At the conclusion of the question he casts further light on the matter:

..I concede that enjoying exists in the noblest power. When it is said that intellect is the noblest power, I concede it. Similarly, the will is the noblest power, because that power which is intellect and that which is will are in no way distinct either in reality or in concept... because those are names *signifying* the same thing, precisely *connoting* distinct acts, namely, the acts of understanding and willing.³⁰⁵

Ockham thus imposes a semantic resolution on the much-disputed question of the mutual priority of acts of intellect and will, by means of his own doctrine of signification and connotation.

³⁰² Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.1.q.3, (*Theol.* I, 422-3), McGrade, 386.

³⁰³ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.1.q.2, (*Theol.* I, 396), McGrade, 368.

³⁰⁴ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.1.q.2, (*Theol.* I, 396), McGrade, 368.

³⁰⁵ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.1.q.2, (*Theol.* I, 403), McGrade, 372.

Conclusion to Chapter 1

Scotus's dismissal of the 'analogy of being' (above, p.50-1), despite its retention by his Franciscan predecessor Bonaventure (p.43) has eliminated the distinction in mode of being between God and creatures which provided the ontological context for Thomas's account of natural finality in creatures: namely, nature or essence understood as a potentiality to being ("I call essence that whose actuality is being", p.12). We hear no more of creatures seeking their perfection in "the fullness of their being". Scotus retains the concept "natural inclination", but now signifying the finite rational creature's desire for the infinite (p.54). Non-rational nature, subject to natural necessity only, is now out of the picture, as far as finality is concerned; this includes, in rational beings, everything except the will (below, chapter 2). With Ockham, natural finality, as such, in the will, is eliminated too.

I have noted (p.23) that "the dignity of receptivity lies at the very heart of being" in the Trinity. This is a reference to the passive (as opposed to active) 'relations of origin' in the Godhead, by which the Son eternally receives being from the Father, and the Holy Spirit from Father and Son. Likewise, in human beings, Augustine's *capacitas Dei* (p.29), and Thomas's 'obediential potency' (p.31) are both principles of receptivity of the supernatural. We will see what becomes of this receptive disposition in the different accounts of freedom (chapter 2) and of grace (chapter 3) of the four scholars.

Chapter Two

Freedom and Nature: Freedom as Rightly Orienting and Directing the Operation of Finality

Introduction

Having established the varying accounts of human nature, as related to the ultimate end, of the four scholars, I now turn to the role each conceives for freedom in that relationship. A radically different concept of freedom begins to emerge after the time of Thomas and Bonaventure. Freedom comes to be seen as a fragile plant, seriously threatened by its hitherto association with nature.

AQUINAS ON FREEDOM

Freedom in Scripture and St. Augustine

For Thomas, the notion of freedom cannot be separated from that of properly human actions (*actiones humanae*). Every properly human act has fulfilment and happiness as its ultimate goal or last end. Furthermore, only one end can be ultimate for rational creatures:

It is impossible for one man's will to be directed at the same time to diverse things as last ends...First, because, since everything desires its own perfection, a man desires for his ultimate end that which he desires as his perfect and crowning good...It is therefore necessary for the last end so to fill man's appetite that nothing is left besides it for man to desire. Which is not possible, if something else be required for his perfection. Consequently it is not possible for the appetite so to tend to two things, as though each were its perfect good.³⁰⁶

In the same way, it is not possible for the will, which he calls the "rational appetite", and whose principle is "that which is naturally desired", to have more than one ultimate end, since "nature tends to one thing only".³⁰⁷ Clearly, for Thomas, in contrast (as we shall see) to Scotus and Ockham, nature "tending to

³⁰⁶ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.1.5*, (*Leo.VI,13*).

³⁰⁷ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.1.5*, (*Leo.VI,13*).

one thing” has no adverse implications for freedom, any more than its corresponding tendencies to the true and the good.

An idea of Thomas’s perspective on what is most essential to human freedom can be had from the texts he chooses to represent patristic commentary on two seminal verses from the Gospel of John in his *Catena Aurea*³⁰⁸. Almost all are taken from Augustine, and all without exception are concerned with freedom as a principle of perfectibility. For example, on John 8:31-32, “*If you make my word your home...you will come to know the truth and the truth will set you free*”,

Augustine comments:

To be freed is to be made free as to be healed is to be made whole. This is plainer in the Greek: ελευθερόω; in the Latin we use the word free chiefly in the sense of escape from danger, relief from care, and the like.³⁰⁹

From what shall the truth free us but from death, corruption, mutability, itself being immortal, uncorrupt, immutable? Absolute immutability is in itself eternity.³¹⁰

Likewise, on John 8:34 and 36, “*..everyone who commits sin is a slave....so if the Son sets you free you will indeed be free*”, Augustine comments:

Do not then abuse your freedom, for the purpose of sinning freely; but use it in order not to sin at all. Your will will be free if it be merciful: you will be free, if you become the servant of righteousness.³¹¹

Freedom can indeed be abused, but the possibility of abuse accrues to freedom accidentally: it does not constitute part of the essence, or the definition, of freedom. The words from John 8:31, “*If you make my words your home*”, would also seem to carry a particular resonance for Thomas. It is notable that he adverts to Scripture in support of his theses to a far greater extent than either Scotus or (especially) Ockham.

³⁰⁸ John Henry Cardinal Newman ed., *Catena Aurea: Commentary on the Four Gospels Collected out of the Works of the Fathers by St. Thomas Aquinas*, Vol.IV, St. John, London, St. Austin Press, 1999. The commentary quotes below are from this edition, 303-304.

³⁰⁹ Augustine, *Sermo* 48.

³¹⁰ Augustine, *De Trinitate*, IV.18, (PL.42,905).

³¹¹ Augustine, *Tract.* 41.8.

In fact, Scripture as a whole, in both Testaments, bears witness to the reality of two distinct types of freedom: the exterior or material, and the interior or spiritual, the former being a 'type' or sign of the latter. The theme reaches what can be regarded as its climax in the exchange between Christ and some of his followers in John 8. The words quoted above concerning truth and freedom, *You will know the truth and the truth will make you free*, are addressed to "the Jews who believed in him". It is evident that their belief was based on what they had seen and heard from him, and perhaps on the expectation of even greater things. Their uncomprehending reply³¹² reveals the essentially 'exterior' nature of their understanding of freedom – as freedom from coercion, religious or otherwise. The reply they receive opens up another dimension of freedom altogether: *In all truth I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin. Now a slave has no permanent standing in the household, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will indeed be free* (vv.34-36). As a commentary on this, Thomas offers Gregory: "And the more freely men follow their perverse desires, the more closely are they in bondage to them"³¹³, and Augustine again:

O miserable bondage! The slave of a human master when wearied with the hardness of his tasks, sometimes takes refuge in flight. But to where does the slave of sin flee? He takes it along with him, wherever he goes; for his sin is within him. The pleasure passes away, but the sin does not pass away: its delight goes, its sting remains behind. He alone can free from sin who came without sin, and was made a sacrifice for sin.³¹⁴

The Receptive Image

Augustine's pastoral perspective places the highest possible value on the human heart's "openness to receive" the gifts of grace that lead the soul

³¹² John 8:33: *We are descended from Abraham and we have never been the slaves of anyone; what do you mean, "You will be set free"?*

³¹³ Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job* XXV.

³¹⁴ Augustine, *Sermo* 47.

towards this perfect freedom. In the *Catena*, Thomas chooses a passage from Augustine's *Tractatus XXII* as commentary on John 5:26: "For as the Father has life in Himself; so He has given to the Son to have life in Himself". Augustine writes: "What then is the difference between them? This, that one gave, the other received".³¹⁵ The Son, eternally begotten of the Father, eternally receives his existence from the Father. Receptivity is intrinsic to the Godhead, in whose image we are created, and is especially appropriated to the Son in whose likeness we are re-created. A heart and disposition open to receive all that it is, and is called to be, is therefore not an aspect that can rightly be omitted from any understanding of interior freedom. As we have seen, Aquinas's selection of commentaries on John 8 points not only to a consensus among the Fathers on the true nature of freedom as interior freedom, but to a similar appreciation on his own part. I will be concerned to address the question whether such "openness to receive" freedom from God in the form of grace is rendered problematic, as a concept and as a pastoral and spiritual reality, by Ockham's philosophical re-casting of the principles of freedom.

³¹⁵ Augustine, *Tractatus XXII*, s.10, (PL, ptbi). This receptivity of the Son is commented on by von Balthasar in his *Theology of History* (London, Sheed & Ward, 1964, pp.25-33), in a sub-chapter entitled *Existence as Receptivity*: "...but always he is what he is on the basis of "not my own will", "not my own honour" (John 7:18). It is of his essence as Son to receive life (5:26), insight (3:11), spirit (3:34-5), word (3:34; 14:24), will (5:30), deed (6:29), doctrine (7:16), work (14:10) and glorification (8:54; 17:22, 24) from another, from the Father. He receives it, indeed, in such a way that he has it all in himself (5:26) and disposes of all that he receives as of his own (10:18, 28); yet never with any denial of that receiving, but affirming it always, eternally, as the ground of his very being....

"The Son's form of existence, which makes him the Son from all eternity (17:5), is the uninterrupted reception of everything that he is, of his very self, from the Father. It is indeed this receiving of himself which gives him his "I", his own inner dimension, his spontaneity, that sonship with which he can answer the Father in a reciprocal giving".

Aquinas: The Eternal Law

Thomas describes the Eternal Law as a ‘type’ (*ratio*) of divine wisdom “as moving all things to their due end”. Just as the divine wisdom creating “has the character of art, exemplar or idea”, so the Eternal Law is “nothing else than “the type of divine wisdom as directing all actions and movements”.³¹⁶ Knowledge of the source of human flourishing, therefore, pertains to Wisdom, of which Aquinas speaks as follows:

Wisdom denotes a certain rectitude of judgment according to the Eternal Law. Now rectitude of judgment is twofold: first, on account of perfect use of reason, secondly, on account of a certain connaturality with the matter about which one has to judge...Accordingly it belongs to the wisdom that is an intellectual virtue to pronounce right judgment about Divine things after reason has made its inquiry, but it belongs to reason as a gift of the Holy Spirit to judge aright about them on account of connaturality with them...Now this sympathy or connaturality for Divine things is the result of charity, which unites us to God, according to 1 Cor.6:17.. Consequently wisdom which is a gift has its cause in the *will*, which cause is charity, but it has its essence in the *intellect*, whose act is to judge aright.³¹⁷

The Wisdom as gift which so operates is a participation in the Divine Wisdom.

“Rectitude of judgment according to the Eternal Law” is not presented as a mere matter of the intellect adverting to *a priori* rules. The “perfect use of reason”, in itself, must entail the intellectual virtue of prudence, which, Thomas tells us elsewhere, is “right reason about things to be done”.³¹⁸ However, prudence does not operate in isolation:

Consequently, it is requisite for prudence, which is right reason about things to be done, that man be well disposed with regard to the ends: and this depends on the rectitude of his appetite. Wherefore, for prudence, there is need of a *moral* virtue, which rectifies the *appetite*... since rectitude of the will is essential to prudence.³¹⁹

“Rectitude of the will”, which means being “well disposed with regard to the ends”, equates with that “sympathy or connaturality with Divine things (which) is

³¹⁶ Aquinas, *ST* I-II.93.1c, (*Leo*.VII,162).

³¹⁷ Aquinas, *ST* II-II.45.2c, (*Leo*.VIII,341), my emphases.

³¹⁸ Aquinas, *ST* I-II.57.4c, (*Leo*.VI,367).

³¹⁹ Aquinas, *ST* I-II.57.4c, (*Leo*.VI,367), my emphases.

the result of charity, which unites us to God”, and which is the gift of the Holy Spirit. Intellect and will, prudence and charity, working in conjunction, constitute the “rectitude of judgment according to the Eternal Law” denoted by Wisdom. Not faculties in isolation, but the entire personality, is engaged in making the judgment.

Thomas makes it abundantly clear that the “Divine Wisdom..directing” is not a matter of violence or coercion, which would cancel the rational creature’s freedom. Each created being is moved or directed by divine providence “according to its own nature”. This movement of individual creatures, too, “bears the character of law”—the natural law. It operates not by coercion, but by means of inclination and connaturality:

..since all things subject to Divine providence are ruled and measured by the eternal law ...it is evident that all things partake somewhat of the eternal law, in so far as, namely, from its being imprinted on them, they derive their respective inclinations to their proper acts and ends. Now, among all others, the rational creature is subject to Divine providence in the most excellent way, in so far as it partakes of a share of providence, by being provident both for itself and for others. Wherefore it has a share of the Eternal Reason, whereby it has a natural inclination to its proper act and end: and this participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is called the natural law.³²⁰

The natural law is “written in the hearts of (all) men” without exception, and “cannot be blotted out” by any sin.³²¹ Intellect or reason, which is the natural appetite for truth, and the will, which is the natural appetite for the good, are both involved in this inclination to the “acts and ends” proper to human beings. The Eternal Law, as ‘type’ of the divine intellect, is truth itself.³²² Regarding the knowledge of this truth:

So then no one can know the eternal law, as it is in itself, except the blessed who see God in His Essence. But every rational creature knows it

³²⁰ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.91.3c*,(*Leo.VII,155*).

³²¹ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.94.6*,(*Leo.VII,173*).

³²² Aquinas, *ST.I-II.93.1.ad.3*,(*Leo.VII.163*).

in its reflection, greater or less. For every knowledge of truth is a kind of reflection and participation of the eternal law, which is the unchangeable truth, as Augustine says³²³ ... Hence the Psalmist...(says) *Many say, Who will show us good things?* in answer to which question he says: *The light of your countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us*: thus implying that the light of natural reason, whereby we discern what is good and what is evil, which is the function of the natural law, is nothing else than an imprint on us of the Divine light. It is therefore evident that the natural law is nothing else than the imprint on us of the eternal law.³²⁴

Similarly, the will, the source of action, is drawn (not coerced) toward *the good*, but in a manner inseparable from that of the intellect inclining toward truth:

The good, insofar as it is a knowable form, is contained within the true as a certain particular truth; the true, insofar as it is an end for our intellectual activity, is contained within the good as a certain particular good.³²⁵

For Thomas, all the moral precepts of the Old Law, i.e. the Decalogue, belong to the Natural Law, of which they are a sort of summary.³²⁶

Aquinas: The Evangelical Law of the Gospel: the “Law of Freedom”

The most perfect possible participation in the Eternal Law that can be attained *in via* is summed up in the New Law of the Gospel, whose defining text is not the Decalogue, but the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5 to 7). This is the Law which fulfils and brings to perfection the Natural Law and the Decalogue, superseding them without destroying them.³²⁷ It is written in the hearts, not of all men, but only of those who have received it in their hearts from Christ, and believed it, believing in Him:

Now that which is preponderant in the law of the New Testament, and whereon all its efficacy is based, is the grace of the Holy Spirit, which is given through faith in Christ. Consequently the New Law is chiefly the grace itself of the Holy Spirit, which is given through faith in Christ.³²⁸

³²³ Augustine, *De Vera Religione* XXXI, (PL.34,147-8).

³²⁴ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.91.2c*, (Leo.VII,154).

³²⁵ Aquinas, *De Malo*.VIc, (Leo.XXIII,149); Richard Regan trans., *Thomas Aquinas: On Evil*, OUP,2003,258.

³²⁶ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.100.1c*, (Leo.VII,206).

³²⁷ Cf. Matthew 5:18.

³²⁸ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.106.1c*, (Leo.VII,273).

The Evangelical Law is unique: it has an external origin superior to human nature, namely, Christ's divine revelation. As the Holy Spirit's grace, it penetrates to the interior of the human person and becomes the source of the supernatural virtues, which are consequently called "infused".

St. Thomas gives primacy to the Evangelical Law; in Christian moral teaching all laws are ordered to it as to their perfection and earthly fulfilment. It is the closest approximation to our final goal. For Aquinas, the Sermon on the Mount is the primary and highest source of moral theology. His exegesis of the Sermon centres on the distinction between interior and exterior acts, a distinction involving, not two completely different acts, but two essential aspects of one and the same act. It is the interior act, however, that determines the moral value of the act. The Old Law is concerned ostensibly with exterior actions, the New Law of the Gospel, given in the Sermon, with interior actions. Accordingly, for Thomas, ethics is concerned primarily with virtues and only secondarily with precepts. The latter provide the necessary context for actions to be virtuous. Virtues regulate moral action, beginning with the interior acts of the person.

Thomas sometimes uses the expressions *instinctus divinus*³²⁹ or *instinctus Spiritus Sancti*³³⁰ to describe the gift of wisdom necessary to discern which actions are in keeping with inward grace. It is an aspect of that "sympathy or connaturality for divine things"³³¹ which grace confers. Therefore, it is also called the "law of liberty" because:

..it also makes us comply freely with these precepts and prohibitions, inasmuch as we do so through the promptings of grace. It is for these two

³²⁹ Aquinas, e.g., ST.I-II.68.1c and ad.2, (Leo.VI,447).

³³⁰ Aquinas, e.g., ST.I-II.68.5.ad.1, (Leo.VI,452).

³³¹ Aquinas, ST.II-II.45.2c, (Leo.VIII,341).

reasons that the New Law is called *the law of perfect liberty* (James 1:25).³³²

This is freedom informed by virtue, which for Thomas is true freedom, in accord with the Gospel. It is the freedom that St. Paul associates with the presence of the Holy Spirit: “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Cor.3:17), and which St. James associates with revelation and the keeping of the commandments: “Talk and behave like people who are going to be judged by the law of freedom” (James 2:12; cf.1:25). Thomas explains it further in terms of habit and in relation to nature:

According to the Philosopher (*Metaph.*1.2), what is *free is cause of itself*. Therefore he acts freely, who acts of his own accord. Now man does of his own accord that which he does from a habit that is suitable to his nature: since a habit inclines one as a second nature. If, however, a habit be in opposition to nature, man would not act according to his nature, but according to some corruption affecting that nature. Since then the grace of the Holy Spirit is like an interior habit bestowed on us and inclining us to act aright, it makes us do freely those things that are becoming to grace, and shun what is opposed to it.³³³

Natural inclination and the freedom bestowed by grace work together for the perfection of nature. Hence the “law of freedom” is in perfect accord with natural finality and the ultimate end, which is Happiness. There is no trace of any opposition between nature and freedom, as nature is not identified univocally with natural necessity, nor between freedom and law, as both are intimately concerned with nature’s perfection. Furthermore, habit is explicitly identified with what man does freely “of his own accord”, and in a manner “suitable to his nature”.

According to Pinckaers’ analysis, this perfect accord between nature, freedom and grace called the law of freedom is the source of a “spiritual spontaneity”, which “animates all of Christian morality”, and:

³³² Aquinas, *ST.I-II.108.1.ad.2,(Leo.VII,284)*.

³³³ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.108.1.ad.2,(Leo.VII,284)*.

For St. Thomas there was absolutely no question of a separation between this inspiration, which is the very perfection of freedom, and morality. Christian morality was spiritual in the Pauline sense of the word or it was nothing. Here we are at the opposite pole from legalism. Legalism is characterised by the external quality of the law as opposed to freedom and spontaneity, and by the tension set up between the two. When law is seen from this standpoint, it drags morality along in its wake and hinders it from exercising its free spontaneity. "Law of liberty" becomes a contradiction in terms and loses all meaning. Moral life is adrift, separated from the Gospel and St. Paul.³³⁴

Aquinas: The Freedom of the Will

As with interior and exterior acts, so with the actions of intellect and will, for Thomas, freedom involves interaction and mutual dependence. This interdependence is especially clear in *De Malo* VI. Here, the principal division of freedom for Thomas is between "freedom of exercise", which is the ability *to act or not to act*, in which the will plays the predominant role, and "freedom of specification", which is the ability *to do this or that*, in accordance with the intellect's choice of means to an end:

Therefore, if we should consider the movement of the soul's powers regarding the object specifying the act, the first source of movement comes from the intellect, since the understood good in this way moves even the will itself. And if we should consider the movement of the soul's powers regarding performance of the act, then the source of the movement comes from the will. For the power to which the chief end belongs always moves to action the power to which the means to the end belongs...And thus does the will move both itself and all the other powers. For example, I understand because I will to do so, and I also use all my other powers and habits because I will to do so.³³⁵

The willed act of the intellect in deliberation presents the will in turn with the choice between contraries which can be freedom of exercise or freedom of specification:

Therefore, since the will moves itself by deliberation, and deliberation is an inquiry that does not yield only one conclusion but leads to contrary conclusions, the will does not move itself necessarily.³³⁶

³³⁴ Pinckaers, *Sources*, 186-187.

³³⁵ Aquinas, *De Malo* VI.c, (Leo.XXIII, 149), Regan, 258.

³³⁶ Aquinas, *De Malo* VI.c, (Leo.XXIII, 149), Regan, 259.

However, this interaction between intellect and will cannot be the subject of an infinite regression:

And since there cannot be an infinite regression, we need to hold that regarding the first movement of the will, something external, at whose instigation the will would begin to will, moves the will of anyone not always actually willing³³⁷...Therefore, we conclude, as Aristotle concludes³³⁸..., that what first moves the intellect and the will is something superior to them, namely, God. And since he moves every kind of thing according to the nature of the moveable thing, for example, light things upward, and heavy things downward, he also moves the will according to its condition, as indeterminately disposed to many things, not in a necessary way. Therefore, if we should consider the movement of the will regarding the performance of an act, the will is evidently not moved in a necessary way.³³⁹

This account of the movement of the human will by God, as in no way diminishing the will's own freedom, has its justification, for Thomas, in the divine acts of creation and conservation, as cause of the free will's being and nature:

As Dionysius says³⁴⁰, it belongs to Divine providence, not to destroy but to preserve the nature of things. Wherefore it moves all things in accordance with their conditions; so that from necessary causes through the Divine motion, effects follow of necessity; but from contingent causes, effects follow contingently. Since, therefore, the will is an active principle, not determinate to one thing, but having an indifferent relation to many things, God so moves it that He does not determine it of necessity to one thing, but its movement remains contingent and not necessary, except in those things to which it is moved naturally.³⁴¹

On the relation between divine providence and human freedom, Brian Davies comments that "human actions falling under providence can be free precisely because of what providence involves. In his (Thomas's) view, we are not free *in spite of* God, but *because of* God".³⁴²

³³⁷ Thomas here rules out movement of rational wills by heavenly bodies, on grounds of the will's immateriality; cf. ST I-II.9.5c, (Leo.VI.80).

³³⁸ Aristotle, *Eud.Ethics* VIII.2, (1248a17-32).

³³⁹ Aquinas, *De Malo* VI.c, (Leo.XXIII,149), Regan,259.

³⁴⁰ Pseudo-Dionysius, *De Divinis Nominibus*.VIII, (PG.3,906).

³⁴¹ Aquinas, ST.I-II.10.4c, (Leo.VI,89).

³⁴² Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, Oxford, Clarendon,1992,175, emphasis in original.

Bernard Lonergan speculates at some length on the metaphysical possibility of this compatibility as found in Thomas, and the scope it leaves for divine causality:

Indeed, both above and below, both right and left, the free choice has determinants over which it exercises no control. God directly controls the orientation of the will to ends; indirectly he controls the situations which intellect apprehends and in which will has to choose; indirectly he also controls both the higher determinants of intellectual attitude or mental pattern and the lower determinants of mood and temperament;³⁴³ finally, each free choice is free only *hic et nunc*, for no man can decide today what he is to will tomorrow.³⁴⁴ There is no end of room for God to work on the free choice without violating it, to govern above its self-governance, to set the stage and guide the reactions and give each character its personal role in the drama of life.³⁴⁵

At the same time, Lonergan acknowledges that “none of these created antecedents can be rigorous determinants of the free choice”. That determination, which yet does not violate the human agent’s freedom, can take place only in the *hic et nunc*, the meeting-point, so to speak, of time and eternity. The divine action is not coercion, but co-operation:

God alone has the property of transcendence. It is only in the logico-metaphysical simultaneity of the atemporal present that God’s knowledge is infallible, his will irresistible, his action efficacious. He exercises control through the created antecedents – true enough; but that is not the infallible, the irresistible, the efficacious, which has its ground not in the creature but in the uncreated, which has its moment not in time but in the cooperation of eternal uncreated action with created and temporal action.³⁴⁶

While the antecedents themselves always incline to what is right and good, there is no guarantee that the creature’s action will be in accordance with them. Sinful acts are the sinner’s responsibility alone. God is not the cause of sin.

In the first place, the will is moved naturally of necessity only to “the good in general” or the *universal* good, represented by man’s last end: “For that good

³⁴³ Cf. SCG III.91.2,4,(Leo.XIV,277-8), Bourke (1975) trans.,40,41.

³⁴⁴ Cf. SCG III.155.3,(Leo.XIV,457-8), Bourke,250.

³⁴⁵ Bernard Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Lonergan, Collected Works, Vol.1, Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran edd., University of Toronto Press, 2000, 117.

³⁴⁶ Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, pp.117-8.

which is the last end is the perfect good fulfilling the desire. Now man's appetite, otherwise the will, is for the universal good."³⁴⁷ The *universal* good, for Thomas, is therefore the good which lacks no essential element of goodness, being the goal and perfection of all rational natures. In the realm of the *particular*, the will is moved of necessity to those particular *acts* to which it has a natural disposition, *not subject to the will*:

Therefore, if the disposition whereby something seems good and suitable to a person is natural and not subject to the will, the will by natural necessity will choose it. For example, all human beings desire by nature to exist, live, and understand.³⁴⁸

This does not apply to dispositions under the will's control, e.g., habits. With regard to particular goods, the will can only be moved necessarily toward something seen to be good in every possible respect, as is the case, for instance, with the acts of existing, living and understanding.³⁴⁹

Even though happiness in general, especially the universal and perfect good which is the happiness of the last end, is willed necessarily, nevertheless, with regard to *particular acts* as means to that end, neither this nor any temporal happiness necessitates the will:

Something active necessarily causes only when it overcomes the power of something passive. And since the will is potential regarding good in general, only something good in every respect overcomes the power of the will so as necessarily to move the will, and the only such good is the perfect good which is happiness (*beatitudo*). And the will cannot not will this good; that is, the will cannot will the contrary. Nevertheless, the will is able not actually to will happiness, since the will can avoid thinking about happiness insofar as the will moves the intellect to its activity. And in this respect, neither does the will necessarily will happiness itself.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁷ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.2.7c*, my emphasis, (*Leo.VI,23*).

³⁴⁸ Aquinas, *De Malo VI.c.*, (*Leo.XXIII,150*), Regan,260; cf. *ST.I-II.10.2.ad.3*, (*Leo.VI.86*); also *ST.I-II.94.2c* quote, chapter 1, p.28 above, regarding inclinations and natural law. It seems pertinent to note that Thomas is here making the distinction between 'nature' and 'will' upon which Scotus will construct his account of freedom.

³⁴⁹ Aquinas, *De Malo VI.c.*, (*Leo.XXIII,150*), Regan,260.

³⁵⁰ Aquinas, *De Malo VI.ad.7*, (*Leo.XXIII,151*), Regan,261.

Consequently, for Thomas, the will as such, in regard to those things subject to it, is necessitated in one respect only: in the matter of *specification* of the universal good, happiness, especially that of the last end. This is so, even though a person may seldom actually think about happiness, or about the ultimate end. In such specification, the intellect tends to play the predominant role. The choice of proximate or intermediate ends, whether or not they are consciously chosen as means to a further end, or as ends in themselves, is never subject to necessity: freedom of specification applies in all such cases. Freedom of exercise applies always and in everything, in the absence of obstruction by an exterior factor.

All of this confirms Thomas's statement that, with regard to its own proper act, the will, which is the rational appetite, is never subject to violence, nor is it subject to coercion, even by God:

God, who is more powerful than the human will, can move the will of man, according to Proverbs 21:1: *The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord; He shall turn it wherever He wills*. But if this were by compulsion, it would no longer be by an act of the will, nor would the will itself be moved, but something else against the will.³⁵¹

The will's non-susceptibility to compulsion, which can only be from an exterior force, is due to the will's very nature as an inclination to the good: it is a matter of what the will *actually is*. It is also because of what the will actually is that Thomas can say that "the last end is in no way a matter of choice".³⁵² It is the will's highest good and perfection.

³⁵¹ Aquinas, *ST I-II.6.4.ad1*, (*Leo.VI,59-60*).

³⁵² Aquinas, *ST I-II.13.3c*, (*Leo.VI,101*).

Is Aquinas a Compatibilist, or an Incompatibilist or Libertarian?

Recent scholars have frequently chosen to address the question of whether Thomas's action theory should be designated 'compatibilist' or 'incompatibilist' with reference to natural necessity only, omitting the dimension of divine providence and causality. I can offer only a few examples (below, pp.98-100) from what is a considerable literature on thomistic free will.

To appreciate the various viewpoints and verdicts of scholars on this issue, one has to be clear about the terms describing different aspects of free will. Thomas, following Augustinian practice, uses *liberum arbitrium*, literally 'free decision' or 'free judgment', to describe the action of the intellect that precedes the choice of means to an end. For the outcome of deliberation, he sometimes uses either *sententia*, 'decision', or *iudicium*, 'judgment'. For the will's act of choosing he uses *electio*, 'choice'. He uses *voluntas* mainly for the willing of the final end, happiness, or 'the good in general'. Also central to the issue is the role Thomas ascribes to the intellect in freedom. When he describes the will as the 'rational appetite', he is acknowledging its dependence on the intellect, not only for its objects, but in large measure for its freedom of choice. It is the intellect that considers and assesses options, and can always reconsider.

Scott MacDonald, in assessing Aquinas's status vis-à-vis compatibilism, concerns himself specifically with *electio*. On this basis, he concludes that Thomas's account is a "moderate libertarianism", on the grounds that he "preserves genuine indeterminacy in human agency while at the same time securing a necessary connection between an agent's free choices and her

reasons for acting”.³⁵³ The role of the intellect is decisive: “Intellectively cognized good moves the will”.³⁵⁴ On the one hand, 1) Thomas is “committed to a thoroughgoing causal theory of free action”, which might point to a compatibilist account; on the other hand, 2) he describes the will at one point as a self-mover³⁵⁵, suggesting a libertarian understanding. However, 1) the will is necessitated, not by the intellect, but only by its own inclination to the universal good, which is “the very nature of the will as it is created by God”,³⁵⁶ and 2) the will, though it moves itself, does not do so *de novo*, without some prior input by the intellect. MacDonald ascribes incompatibilism (of a “moderate libertarian” variety) to Aquinas on the basis of what he calls ‘metajudgement’: namely, the intellect’s ability to judge about its own judgments. He cites Aquinas:

Now judgment is in the power of the one who judges insofar as the one who judges can judge about his own judgment... But judging about one’s own judgment is something only reason can do: reason is reflexive with respect to its own acts and cognizes the relations among the things about which and by means of which it judges. Hence, the root of our entire freedom is planted in reason.³⁵⁷

He therefore concludes that “meta-judgment – the mechanism by which reason can be reflexive with respect to its own acts – and not a fully autonomous will” is that in which “the root of our entire freedom is planted”.³⁵⁸

Eleonore Stump³⁵⁹ focuses also on *liberum arbitrium*, whose volitions are associated by Aquinas only with *electio*. She concludes that Aquinas is “libertarian in some sense”, in maintaining that a) humans have free will, and b)

³⁵³ Scott MacDonald, *Aquinas’s Libertarian Account of Free Choice*, *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 52,no.2,1998,309-328,312.

³⁵⁴ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.82.3.ad.2*,(*Leo.V*,299).

³⁵⁵ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.9.3c*,(*Leo.VI*,78).

³⁵⁶ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.9.6c*,(*Leo.VI*,82), MacDonald,316.

³⁵⁷ Aquinas, *De Veritate* XXIV.2,(*Leo.XXII*,Vol.3,685), MacDonald trans.,324.

³⁵⁸ MacDonald,328;

³⁵⁹ Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas’s Account of Freedom: Intellect and Will*, *The Monist*, 80,n.4,1997,576-597.

the will's acts are not subject to any causal determinism, which in his case means determinism by exterior factors. Freedom must issue entirely from within the agent, and is "a property primarily of a human being, not of some particular component of a human being".³⁶⁰ Stump shows how the interaction ("dynamic feedback") between intellect and will means that alternative possibilities, though an element in freedom, are not necessary to freedom according to Thomas: "Freedom is opposed to the necessity of coercion, but not to the necessity of inclination".³⁶¹ The will's necessary inclination, when guided by the intellect's free judgment of which particular means to the good is to be chosen, chooses it in a way not contrary to freedom. Thus, "one can hold an incompatibilist theory of free will, as Aquinas does,... (i.e.) one can maintain that the will is free in a way incompatible with causal determinism without espousing the Franciscan version of libertarianism"³⁶² The latter refers either to Scotus's "synchronic contingency" (see p.115 below) or to Ockham's "freedom of indifference" (p.129 below).

Aquinas: Evil as Defective Choice.

In *De Veritate* XXII.6, Thomas lists three indeterminations of the will involved in freedom. The first two concern the freedom of exercise and freedom of specification already referred to, involving, respectively, indetermination regarding action: to act or not, and indetermination regarding the object: to choose this or that. The third concerns finality:

A third indetermination of the will is found in regard to its ordination to its end inasmuch as the will can desire what is in truth directed to its appointed end or what is so only in appearance. This indetermination comes from two sources: from the indetermination in regard to its object in the case of the

³⁶⁰ Stump, 581.

³⁶¹ Aquinas, *De Veritate* XXII.5.sc3, (*Leo*.XXII, Vol.3, 623).

³⁶² Stump, 594.

means. And again from the indetermination of our apprehension, which can be correct or not. From a given true principle a false conclusion does not follow unless it is because of some falsity in the reasoning through a false subsumption or the false relating of the principle to the conclusion. In the same way from a correct appetite for the last end the inordinate desire for something could not follow unless reason were to take as referable to the end something which is not so referable. Thus a person who naturally desires happiness with a correct appetite would never be led to desire fornication except in so far as he apprehends it as a good for man, seeing that it is something pleasurable, and as referable to happiness as a sort of copy of it. From this there follows the indetermination of the will by which it can desire good or evil.³⁶³

A failure in apprehending the true ordination of an action in relation to the end, involving a failure of comparison between the act and the principle, which is the ultimate end, and resulting in a false judgment,³⁶⁴ is not compatible with the will's freedom:

Where there is no failure in apprehending and comparing, there can be no willing of evil even when there is question of means, as is clear among the blessed. For this reason it is said³⁶⁵ that to will evil is not freedom or any part of it.³⁶⁶

For Thomas, freedom is not just a principle of imputability or responsibility, as it would later come to be considered (the forensic account): it is also, and indefectibly, a principle of perfectibility, grounded in the human desire for happiness: that is to say, in the very essence of man as rational creature.

Aquinas: Freedom for Excellence

The term, "freedom for excellence" does not appear in Aquinas's writings: it is of more recent provenance, and is advanced by Pinckaers in *The Sources of Christian Ethics*³⁶⁷. However, it seems reasonable to assume that Thomas would have expected his readers to be perfectly familiar with the Johannine

³⁶³ Aquinas, *De Veritate* XXII.6c, (Leo.XXII.627-8), Schmidt trans., Hackett, Vol.III, 58.

³⁶⁴ Cf. Aquinas, *ST* Ia.83.1c, (Leo.V, 307).

³⁶⁵ Anselm, *De Libero Arbitrio* I, (PL.158, 490).

³⁶⁶ Aquinas, *De Veritate* XXII.6c, (Leo.XXII, 627-8), Schmidt, Hackett, Vol.III, 59.

³⁶⁷ Pinckaers, *Sources*, ch.15, 354-378.

passages cited above (p.85), equating sin with slavery and, by inference, sanctification and salvation with the liberation presaged by Moses and Exodus.

For Thomas, freedom is the outcome of the mind's inclination to truth and the will's inclination to goodness:

The root of liberty is the will as the subject thereof; but it is the reason as its cause. For the will can tend freely towards various objects, precisely because the reason can have various perceptions of good. Hence philosophers define the free-will as being a free judgment arising from reason, implying that reason is the root of liberty.³⁶⁸

Here, all three types of freedom are implied and associated: freedom of exercise, freedom of specification, and the "freedom for excellence" involved in an unobstructed and rightly-directed ordination to truth and goodness. It is the latter, especially, that is lost through sin:

Man is said to have lost free-will by falling into sin, not as to natural liberty, which is freedom from coercion, but as regards freedom from fault and unhappiness.³⁶⁹

Freedom is a *capacity* for truth and goodness, therefore for happiness. This capacity, the natural inclination to virtue, in accordance with the nature in which it inheres, is diminished by sin:

..the natural inclination to virtue is diminished by sin, because human acts produce an inclination to like acts.³⁷⁰ Now from the very fact that a thing becomes inclined to one of two contraries, its inclination to the other contrary must needs be diminished. Wherefore, as sin is opposed to virtue, from the very fact that a man sins, there results a diminution of that good of nature which is the inclination to virtue....in so far as an obstacle is placed against its attaining its term".³⁷¹

The natural inclination to virtue "is befitting to man from the very fact that he is a rational being:

for it is due to this that he performs actions in accord with reason, which is to act virtuously. Now sin cannot entirely take away from man the fact that he is a rational being, for then he would no longer be capable of sin.

³⁶⁸ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.17.1.ad.2*,(*Leo.VI.118*).

³⁶⁹ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.83.2.ad.3*,(*Leo.V.309*).

³⁷⁰ Aquinas, *Cf.ST.I-II.50.1c*,(*Leo.VI.317*) regarding habit or disposition.

³⁷¹ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.85.1c*,(*Leo.VII.110*).

Wherefore it is not possible for the good of nature to be destroyed entirely.³⁷²

Reason and will are both intimately involved in the damage done to human nature by sin, just as they are intimately involved in the life of virtue:

..through sin, the reason is obscured, especially in practical matters, the will hardened to evil, good actions become more difficult, and concupiscence more impetuous.³⁷³

Reason and will find their perfection and fullness in the life of grace: therefore freedom does too. “Freedom for excellence” involves not only liberation from sinful habits and their harmful effects, but also from attachments to earthly goods of all sorts that impede progress in spiritual life. Thomas’s exegesis of the Sermon on the Mount addresses the issue of the ‘evangelical counsels’ of poverty, chastity and obedience:

The difference between a counsel and a commandment is that a commandment implies obligation, whereas a counsel is left to the option of the one to whom it is given. Consequently, in the New Law, which is the law of liberty, counsels are added to the commandments, and not in the Old Law which is the law of bondage.³⁷⁴

Commandments concern what is necessary to gain “the end of eternal bliss”; counsels concern matters which “render the gaining of this end more assured and expeditious”.

Aquinas: Freedom and Beatitude

Richard Cross, writing on Scotus, raises the problem of freedom *in patria*.

Catholic doctrine, he says, holds that the saints enjoy the beatific vision for ever, and cannot lose it. This must entail impeccability, since, by sinning, they would lose it. He then raises the objection that if the saints are impeccable, “it

³⁷² Aquinas, ST.I-II.85.2c,(Leo.VII.111).

³⁷³ Aquinas, ST.I-II.85.3c,(Leo.VII.113) .

³⁷⁴ Aquinas, ST.I-II.108.4c,(Leo.VII,288).

looks as if they cannot be free". Among the solutions proposed by the schoolmen,

Aquinas is happy to concede that we will not be free in heaven. It is central to Aquinas's action theory that our will responds automatically to whatever we perceive will make us happy. ...Our lack of freedom in heaven coincides exactly with the general contours of Aquinas's action theory.³⁷⁵

Aquinas actually (and happily) concedes that we will not be free *to sin* in heaven. The saints in heaven are not only free, but their freedom has attained perfection, as it is a share in God's own freedom, just as their human nature has attained perfection because, sharing in divine life, it shares in the divine nature. For Thomas, the ability to sin is the defect of freedom, not a constituent of it:

..since man, by his natural reason, is inclined to justice, while sin is contrary to natural reason, it follows that freedom from sin is true freedom, which is united to the servitude of justice, since they both incline man to that which is becoming to him. In like manner, true servitude is the servitude of sin, which is connected with freedom from justice, because man is thereby hindered from attaining that which is proper to him. That a man become the servant of justice or sin results from his efforts....³⁷⁶

Unless the appropriate effort (repentance) is made, sin leads to further sin, and further unhappiness. Moreover, unrepented, habitual sin damages human nature by diminishing the natural inclination to virtue,³⁷⁷ and causing spiritual blindness.³⁷⁸ What Thomas calls true freedom is a gift of grace, something to be *received*, which re-orientes us and sets us on the road to our final end, beatitude.

In Thomas's account, both 'freedom of exercise' and 'freedom of specification', involving a choice between contraries, exist *in patria*, in the saints as in the angels; but the contraries in question do not include the contraries of good and evil, virtue and sin. They are always, and in everything, referred to

³⁷⁵ Richard Cross, *Duns Scotus*, Great Medieval Thinkers, OUP, 1999, 150.

³⁷⁶ Aquinas, *ST.II-II.183.4c*, (*Leo.X*, 449).

³⁷⁷ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.85.1c*, (*Leo.VII*, 110).

³⁷⁸ Aquinas, *ST.II-II.15.1-3*, (*Leo.VIII*, 118-120).

God. The soul of the blessed is as naturally ordained to the good, as the intellect to first principles, and not to contraries in respect of those:

For the intellect cannot but assent to naturally known principles; in the same way the will cannot help clinging to good, formally as good; because the will is naturally ordained to good as to its proper object. Consequently the will of the angels is referred to opposites, as to doing many things, or not doing them. But they have no tendency to opposites with regard to God Himself, whom they see to be the very nature of goodness; but in all things their aim is towards God, whichever alternative they choose, that is not sinful.³⁷⁹

Eleonore Stump gives a concise explanation of this in terms of the will's dependence on the intellect: the intellects of the Blessed "can no longer find descriptions under which to present as good things that are really evil. And so, although the blessed cannot will evil, they nonetheless will freely whatever they will".³⁸⁰ For Aquinas, freedom is not only compatible with the life of the blessed *in patria*, it reaches its perfection and fulfilment there. This accords perfectly with the status of freedom as a gift of grace from the Holy Spirit, which grows and is perfected with the virtues.

BONAVENTURE ON FREEDOM

The idea of free-will as a faculty distinct from will, representing the Father, in the soul as *imago Dei*, was current in some Franciscan circles in Bonaventure's time. It may have been especially attractive to Bonaventure in view of his frequent use of Trinitarian imagery. Nevertheless, after examining the reasons for and against it, he rejects any basis for it in reality, or in "what is really there". However, he does allow it some validity "according to the way we perceive things":

I grant that as far as what is there is concerned, *liberum arbitrium* does not mean a power distinct from reason or will. Nevertheless, I grant that a

³⁷⁹ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.62.8.ad 2*, (Leo.V, 118).

³⁸⁰ Stump, 590.

distinction can be drawn from the point of view of how we perceive things, and from this point of view it can be called “a faculty of both” [i.e., of reason and will]... For the moment, it’s enough to say that there is not so great a distinction that *liberum arbitrium* is another power within the class of powers, really distinct from reason and will.³⁸¹

Bonaventure’s account of freedom is largely found in his treatment of the relationship between free will and grace. It is explicitly based on Augustine, regarding divine gratuity and liberality, and the role of free will in receptiveness and co-operation with the gifts of grace:

It is true, as Augustine says, that “He who created you without your assistance will not justify you without your consent”.³⁸² Yet it is also true that *There is a question not of him who wills nor of him who runs, but of God showing mercy*. Once more it is true that no man may take pride in his own merits, for God crowns within us nothing but His own gifts:³⁸³ reserving to Himself the generous distribution of the favours of grace, teaching man not to be an ingrate, nor to glory in himself as if he had not received, instead of glorying in the Lord.³⁸⁴

Bonaventure shares with Thomas an exalted view of the essential nature of free will,³⁸⁵ with complete clarity as to its current state, and its total dependence on grace:

In regard to grace as a remedy for sin, the following must be held. Although free will is “the greatest power next to God”, it is by nature liable to rush headlong into sin, out of which it is completely unable to rise without the divine assistance called sanctifying grace. Such grace, in itself a fully sufficient remedy for sin, is not poured into the soul of an adult person without the consent of his free will.³⁸⁶

God re-creates the soul of the contrite sinner by the infusion of the gifts of grace, but always and only with the free consent and co-operation of the sinner, whose nature is never suppressed or overruled:

..God effects this reformation in such a way as not to impair the laws implanted in nature: granting grace to man’s free will, but without forcing it, so that freedom of choice remains. Hence, for the *expulsion of sin*, not only must grace be introduced, but free will itself must consent to the expulsion through that detestation of all sin which we call *contrition*....In addition, free

³⁸¹ Bonaventure, *In Sent.* II, d. 25, p. 1, a. 1, q. 2, (*Quar.* II, 596).

³⁸² Augustine, *Sermo.* 169. 11. 13, (*PL.* 38, 922).

³⁸³ Augustine, *Enarr. in psalmos*, Ps. 70, c. 2: 5, (*PL.* 36, 895); Ps. 102, c. 7, (*PL.* 37, 132); *Sermo.* 170. 10. 10, (*PL.* 38, 932); *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*, 6. 15, (*PL.* 44, 890).

³⁸⁴ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, V. 3. 6, (*Quar.* V, 255), de Vinck trans., 191-2.

³⁸⁵ Above, p. 97.

³⁸⁶ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, V. 3. 1, (*Quar.* V, 254), de Vinck, 189.

will must consent to the infusion of grace by approving and accepting the divine gift through what we call an act of *volition*.³⁸⁷

Bonaventure leaves us with a very strong sense of God's generosity in pouring out the gifts of grace on those open to receive them; divine liberality, and not just divine liberty, is Bonaventure's emphasis. Everything comes through the first and principal gift, the 'Gift' Himself of the Holy Spirit:

The Holy Spirit is the first Gift. Whatever comes afterwards must be referred to what is prior. Consequently, every gift is reduced to the gift that is the Holy Spirit. Hence in every gift the reason of its donation is the Holy Spirit.³⁸⁸

At the same time, the Holy Spirit never usurps or trespasses on the legitimate freedom necessary for the soul's co-operation with grace and progress in perfection.

Freedom and Necessity: The 1270 and 1277 Condemnations

In 1268, Bonaventure himself draws attention to three errors he sees arising from contemporary misinterpretation and misuse of Aristotle, and constituting a danger to Christian faith. The erroneous doctrines in question posit 1) eternity of the world, i.e. as not created in time or having a beginning; 2) the '*necessitas fatalis*', the determining of the will by the stars, and 3) the unicity of the intellectual soul for all men, also now called 'Averroist monopsychism'. He sees the latter as the worst, since it contains the other two.³⁸⁹ What concerns us here is the implication of Aquinas in some of the 13 articles condemned in 1270, when Thomas himself was alive and teaching in Paris, and in the 219 articles condemned in 1277. The 1270 condemnation included the three cited by Bonaventure above.

³⁸⁷ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, V.3.4, (*Quar.*V,255), de Vinck, 190.

³⁸⁸ Bonaventure, *Sent.*I,d.18,q.1,f.3, (*Quar.*I,323), Charles Carpenter trans., *Theology as the Road to Holiness in St. Bonaventure*, NY, Paulist Press, 1999, 137.

³⁸⁹ Bonaventure, *Collationes de septem donis Spiritus Sancti*, VII, nn.16-19, (*Quar.*V,495-6).

On the subject of determinism of the will by the stars, Thomas gives a succinct answer in a short letter from around the same period, addressed to an enquirer, concerning the licitness of astrology:

The will of man is not subject to the necessity of the stars, for if free will were to disappear, we would no longer be able to impute merit to good works, nor fault to evil ones. The Christian must therefore hold as very certain that what depends on the will – for example, human acts – is not subject to the stars by necessity.³⁹⁰

Thomas concludes that astrology is seriously sinful.³⁹¹ The same subject is covered at much greater length in the two *Summas*. Thomas allows that heavenly bodies produce the non-rational movements of bodies on earth, mediating divine primary causality,³⁹² but have no influence on human actions produced by free will.³⁹³ The question of free choice is also dealt with in *De Malo*, chapter VI, which Torrell dates to just before or just after the Paris condemnations of 1270. He also notes that it “breaks the regular flow of the *De Malo*”, being inserted between chapters on original sin and actual sin, as if to “update” the subject in view of the controversy reigning at the time. Perhaps significantly, it places more emphasis on the role of the will than Thomas’s earlier writings on free choice.

Henry of Ghent: The Superiority of the Will

Henry’s account of the operation and status of the will stands at the opposite pole from the ‘necessitarianism’ condemned in the articles. For Henry, the radical freedom, or spontaneity, of the will is such that the known object does not move it in any way at all: “Simply speaking, it must be said that the will in

³⁹⁰ Aquinas, *De iudiciis astrorum*, lines 28-35, (Leo. XLIII, 201), Torrell trans., 215.

³⁹¹ Torrell, Vol. 1, 356.

³⁹² Aquinas, *ST*. Ia. 115.3, (Leo. V, 541-2); *SCG*. III, 82, (Leo. XIV, 243).

³⁹³ Aquinas, *ST*. Ia. 115.4, (Leo. V, 544); *SCG*. III. 84-87, (Leo. XIV, 248-267).

the act of willing is moved by no other, but by itself alone”.³⁹⁴ The object is merely a *sine qua non* without which no act of volition could take place. Even Scotus, whose ‘voluntarist’ credentials were never in doubt, is not entirely happy with this almost total redundancy, so to speak, of the object. He rejects what he calls Henry’s “*opinio extrema*”, as well as its opposite, the opinion that the object or phantasm alone is the effective cause of the act of the will (a position also condemned in article 191 of Bishop Tempier’s 219 articles), and adopts a *via media* on the cause of volitions:

Therefore I hold an intermediate position, that will as well as object concur in causing the act of willing, in such a way that the act of willing is from the will and from the known object as effective cause.³⁹⁵

For Henry, the will itself, as a spiritual power is a “first mover” of the intellect, as well as of every other power. In his *Quodlibets*, Henry explains in some detail why freedom requires the will to be a self-moved first mover, and how this is metaphysically possible.³⁹⁶ Likewise – and this places him in radical opposition to Thomas – Henry holds that sinful acts result firstly from a disorder of the will, not of reason.³⁹⁷ For this reason, he also places all the moral virtues in the will.³⁹⁸ Macken³⁹⁹ summarizes his position as follows: the *object* of the will is the good *simpliciter*. This good is for the will the ultimate end. The *object* of the intelligence is the true, which is the good of a particular thing, namely, the intellect. It is therefore an end subordinate to, and directed to, the other as to its

³⁹⁴ Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet*, IX.5c, quoted in *Ioannis Duns Scoti, Opera Omnia*, (Vatican, Vol. XIX, 246, note F), my translation.

³⁹⁵ Scotus, *Lectura II*, d. 25, q. unica, (Vatican, XIX, 253) my translation: *Ideo teneo viam mediam, quod tam voluntas quam obiectum concurrant ad causandum actum volendi, ita quod actus volendi est a voluntate et ab obiecto cognito ut a causa effectiva*.

³⁹⁶ Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet*, IX.5; XII.26; XI.6; XIII.11. (Hoffmann, *Intellectualism*, 419).

³⁹⁷ Henry, *Quodlibet*, I.17.

³⁹⁸ Henry, *Quodlibet*, IV.22.

³⁹⁹ R. Macken, *La volonté humaine, faculté plus élevée que l'intelligence selon Henri de Gand*, *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale*, XLII, 1975, 5-51, 12.

ultimate end. Therefore, the will is the superior faculty. Scotus, however, will reject this argument, on the grounds that the objects of the faculties can tell us nothing about the hierarchy of the faculties.⁴⁰⁰

For Henry, the *acts* of the two faculties can be compared a) as they are in themselves, and b) in so far as they perfect their subject. In themselves, the will is always more noble (*nobilior*) than the intellect, as its act is to will, that is, to love. In addition, the total impress, or ascendancy, of the intellect is far less than that of the will over the intellect. Macken comments on this denial of equality of influence of the two faculties: *c'est là le point de rupture entre volontaristes et intellectualistes*.⁴⁰¹

Aquinas: The Faculties of the Soul

Henry's system tends to "establish", so to speak, the rupture, by ranging itself in opposition to other, underlying aspects of Thomas's account, such as the distinction between being and essence in creatures, and their identity in God. This was a concept Thomas had considered absolutely necessary for a sound metaphysical grasp of the relationship between realities, natural and supernatural. The issue concerns us here only because it underlies the distinction Thomas also makes between the essence of the soul and its faculties, and between the faculties themselves. The distinction in creatures between essence (as potency) and being (as act), has a 'parallel' in the distinction between faculty or power (potency) and operation (act). But, whereas whatever creaturely essence exists is always in the act of being, the faculties or

⁴⁰⁰ Scotus, *Ordinatio* IV, d.49, q. ex latere (Olms-Wadding, X.396)

⁴⁰¹ Macken, *La volonté*, 9

powers, of intellect and will for instance, are not always operative, therefore not always in act. Therefore they must be distinct from the essence.

For the soul by its very essence is an act. Therefore if the very essence of the soul were the immediate principle of operation, whatever has a soul would always have actual vital actions, as that which has a soul is always an actually living thing... Now we observe that what has a soul is not always actual with respect to its vital operations... Therefore it follows that the essence of the soul is not its power. For nothing is in potentiality by reason of an act, as act.⁴⁰²

Only in God, whose being is both his essence and his operation, is this not⁴⁰³ the case:

But in God alone his action of understanding is his very being. Wherefore in God alone is his intellect his essence: while in intellectual creatures, the intellect is a power.⁴⁰⁴

The powers of the soul are, therefore, not the essence, but accidents of the soul, though not in the primary sense of accident, but the secondary: that of quality. As such, they are natural properties (*propria*), of the soul, which “flow from the essence of the soul as from their principle”.⁴⁰⁵ As the soul is uniquely the form of the body, there are five genera of powers in the soul: vegetative, sensitive, appetitive, locomotive and intellectual.⁴⁰⁶ All are concerned with perfective action, the latter especially with the ultimate perfection, beatitude. Man, as the lowest of the creatures capable of attaining the “universal and perfect goodness of beatitude”, needs a greater variety of operations and powers: also because “it is on the confines of spiritual and corporeal creatures; and therefore the powers of both meet together in the soul”.⁴⁰⁷

Thomas has associated what he calls “true freedom” with the perfecting action of the soul’s powers or faculties, in which the virtues are located. He

⁴⁰² Aquinas, *ST.Ia.77.1c*, (*Leo.V*,236-7).

⁴⁰³ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.77.1.ad.5*, (*Leo.V*,237).

⁴⁰⁴ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.79.1c*, (*Leo.V*,258).

⁴⁰⁵ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.77.6c*, (*Leo.V*,246).

⁴⁰⁶ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.78.1sc*, (*Leo.V*,250).

⁴⁰⁷ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.77.2c*, (*Leo.V*,240).

has also, in the course of distinguishing the soul's faculties from each other and from the essence of the soul, made a connection between the essence-being distinction and the power-operation distinction in the soul. Each of these distinctions, as potency and act, is intimately concerned with the perfecting of the soul in Thomas's account. As to whether they are to be regarded as "real", we can presumably take it that, in Thomas's mind, they are as real as the soul's capacity for being perfected. Likewise, the essence of the soul, which is the source and cause of the faculties, as well as true freedom in action, are the principles of the soul's perfectibility. We will see what becomes of this account when the essence-being distinction is rejected in favour of a univocal concept of being as between God and creatures.

SCOTUS ON FREEDOM

The Priority of Acts of Willing

Scotus rejects Thomas's 'interactive' account of the roles of intellect and will. Concerning acts as the standard of comparison, he quotes from the place where Thomas gives the terms according to which each faculty in turn can be considered the superior:

From this we can easily understand why these powers include one another in their acts, because the intellect understands that the will wills, and the will wills the intellect to understand.⁴⁰⁸

Scotus replies that each is only a partial, not a total cause of the act of the other. The act of the intellect, as characteristically with Scotus, is placed under the heading of "nature" – and natural causes operate by necessity. If the intellect was the total cause of the will's act, there would be no free will:

⁴⁰⁸ Aquinas, *ST* Ia.82.4.ad.1,(*Leo*.V.303).

However, it is clear that intellection is not the total cause of volition, because, since the first intellection is caused by a merely natural cause, and the intellection is not free, ultimately whatever is caused is similarly caused of necessity, and thus whatever interaction there may be in acts of intellect and will, the whole process must be mere natural necessity; and as this is not adequate to preserve liberty in man, it must be said that intellection is not the total cause of volition, but that the will, which alone is free, has the ascendancy over it.⁴⁰⁹

In addition, the intellect is only a *causa subserviens voluntati*, in view of the will's essential freedom. The will, for its part, is only a partial cause of the intellect's act: it is, after all, the intellect's *own* act that it commands. However:

Even if only partial, it will be a cause of a higher order, thus the will's command of the intellect is a higher cause with respect to its act. The intellect, however, if it is a cause of volition, is a cause subservient to the will, despite having the primary act in the order of generation.⁴¹⁰

Intellect and will can be compared either with the proper act each elicits, or with regard to the causality they exercise over other subordinate powers, in our case mainly of the body, "the intellect by showing and directing; the will by inclining and commanding". In this respect, the intellect comes under the heading of "nature" as it is determined to the act of understanding. It does not have it in its power to both understand and not understand (at any given moment), or to both assent and dissent. The will, on the other hand, can elicit opposite acts.⁴¹¹ Scotus had earlier pointed out that there is only a twofold generic way in which an operation proper to a potency can be elicited: either 1) the potency of itself is determined in its action, or 2) it is not of itself determined

⁴⁰⁹ Scotus, *Ordinatio* IV, d.49, q. ex latere, n.16, (Vivès XXI, 152), my translation: *Quod autem intellectio non sit totalis causa volitionis, patet, quia cum prima intellectio causetur a causa mere naturali, et intellectio sit non libera, ulterius simili necessitate causaret quidquid causaret, et sic quomodocumque circuli fierent in actibus intellectus et voluntatis, totus processus esset mere necessitate naturali; quod cum sit inconveniens, ut salvetur libertas in homine, oportet dicere, posita intellectione, non habere causam totalem volitionis, sed principaliorem respectu eius esse voluntatem quae sola libera est.*

⁴¹⁰ Scotus, *Ordinatio* IV, d.49, q. ex latere, n.16, (Vivès, XXI, 151), my translation: *Et si partiali, hoc erit de causa superioris ordinis, et hoc modo voluntas imperans intellectui est causa superior respectu actus eius. Intellectus autem, si est causa volitionis, est causa subserviens voluntati, tamquam habens actionem primam ordine generationis.*

⁴¹¹ Scotus, *In Metaph.* IX, q.15, (Olms-Wad. IV, 796): text and translation, Allan B. Wolter, *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality*, Washington, DC, CUA Press, 1986, 154, 155.

but can perform opposite acts, or not act at all. Taking his cue from Aristotle,⁴¹² he calls the first sort “nature”, and the second sort “will”. Hence the primary division of active potencies is into nature and will.

The will is the *potentia rationalis*, which is not of itself determined to any one of a choice of opposites. Through its elicited act, the will determines the intellect with respect to causality *ad extra*. Aristotle, he points out, had called this function of the will “desire (*appetitum*), or *prohaeresis*, i.e., choice”, but had not called it “will”, i.e., a potency. Scotus counters that, if the intellect is to be called a “rational potency”, it can only be in virtue of its subordinate concurrence with the will, not with other subordinate powers, and not in itself. In the latter two cases it comes under the heading of “nature”, and not of “will”.⁴¹³ The will, on the other hand, is properly “rational”, as it has to do with opposites, not in the determined way of a nature, but as freely self-determined:

But if “rational” is understood to mean “with reason”, then the will is properly rational, and it has to do with opposites, both as regards its own act and as regards the acts it controls (*actus inferiorum*). And it has to do with opposites not in the way that a nature, like the intellect, acts, which has no power to determine itself in any other way. But the will acts freely, for it has the power of self-determination.⁴¹⁴

Unsurprisingly, he is in agreement with Thomas that the will, by its very nature, cannot be coerced, “for it is a contradiction for the will to be simply forced to will”.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹² Aristotle, *Physics*.II.

⁴¹³ Scotus, *In Metaph.*IX,q.15,(Olms-Wad.IV,796-802), Wolter.*Duns Scotus*, Latin text and trans.,157.

⁴¹⁴ Scotus, *In Metaph.*IX,q.15,(Olms-Wad.IV,796-802), Wolter trans.,*Duns Scotus*,157.

⁴¹⁵ Scotus, *Ordinatio*,IV,d.29,q.un.,n.6,(Olms-Wad.,IX,618),Wolter,175.

Scotus: Synchronic Contingency

It is possible to observe, at this point, that the “anti-necessitarian” agenda which forms the background and context to much (if not all) of Scotus’s whole *opus*, is already giving rise, where freedom is concerned, to a preoccupation with freedom as a bare and unimpeded choice of contraries. In this respect, the “Condemnations” of 1277 would indeed seem to be a major turning-point. “For who would deny”, says Scotus, “that an agent is more perfect the less it is determined, dependent, and limited in its action or effect?”⁴¹⁶ For Scotus, the conventional, “diachronic” or successive notion of contingency did not adequately safeguard the distinction between “nature” and “will”, that is, between determinism or necessity, and indeterminism or freedom, especially free-willing. Neither did an account such as Thomas’s, which describes the will as the “rational appetite”,⁴¹⁷ but in a sense that sometimes subordinates it to the intellect. For Scotus, the will is a rational potency in its own right, and in a manner in which “rational” is equated with “free” and “indetermined”.

The synchronicity Scotus has in mind, however, turns out to concern instants of time only in terms of *logical* potency. In terms of real contingency, or possibility, it is a matter of “instants of *nature*”, based on the distinction between the act itself and the faculty or potency for the act:

This logical possibility [of willing different objects] does not exist according as the will has acts successively [i.e. diachronically], but in the same instant. For in the same instant in which the will has one act of willing, it can have an opposite act of willing in and for that very same instant ... Corresponding to this logical potency is a real potency, for every cause is prior in understanding with respect to its effect. Thus, the will, in the instant

⁴¹⁶ Scotus, *In Metaph.* IX, q. 15, (Olms-Wad. IV, 796-802); Wolter trans., *Duns Scotus*, 159.

⁴¹⁷ Cf. Aquinas, *ST. I-II*. 8. 1c, (Leo. VI, 68); *Ia*. 82. aa. 3, 4, (Leo. V, 298-304).

in which it elicits an act of willing...has a contingent relation to the act, so that what is willing *a* can will against *a*.⁴¹⁸

Clearly, this could not be the case if the will were dependent on the intellect's deliberation and judgment. The freedom that Scotus is so concerned to safeguard here quite clearly comprises Thomas's categories of "freedom of exercise" (to do or not to do) and "freedom of specification" (to do this or that). Equally clearly it does not include what Thomas calls "true freedom": that is, freedom from the slavery of sin, or freedom of self-possession; this does not involve a bare choice between contraries, but only the ability to make the right choice. Scotus classifies this sort of freedom as an '*affectio*' or tendency of the will associated with virtue, but ascribes it strictly to the rationality he attributes to the will rather than to the intellect.

Scotus: The Formal Distinction and the Faculties of the Soul

Aquinas' account of the soul and its faculties is conducive, as we have seen, to considerations of perfectibility, and therefore of finality, based on potency and act, and the different relations to being of the soul's essence and its powers. Scotus's metaphysical approach to that distinction is based on what he calls "unitive containment" of the powers by the essence.⁴¹⁹ He is clear that the distinction is not real, but merely *formal*, which means that the definition of the essence does not include the faculties, nor vice-versa, even though the faculties are not really distinct from it or from each other. He agrees with Thomas that they are '*propria*' of the soul (p.111 above), and that the essence of the soul is

⁴¹⁸ Scotus, *Lectura I*, d.39, qq.1-5, nn.50-51, (Vat.XVII,495), trans., Thomas Williams, *The Libertarian Foundations of Scotus's Moral Philosophy*, *The Thomist*, 62, 1998, 193-215, 196-7.

⁴¹⁹ Scotus, *Ordinatio*.II, d.16, q.un..n.17, (Olms-Wadding, VI, pt.2, 772).

in some way logically prior to them.⁴²⁰ However, *propria* are inseparable properties, and real distinction requires separability.⁴²¹

The 'formal distinction' makes it possible to speak, effectively, of the distinction between the soul's essence and its powers in the same terms as are applied to the distinction between the divine essence and its attributes, the divine intellect and will included. Richard Cross notes that "Scotus's God is clearly far less simple than Aquinas's",⁴²² because his univocity theory of religious language is based on the metaphysical presupposition that, even in God, there must be some sort of distinction between his essential attributes. This would not be possible on the basis of Aquinas's absolute divine simplicity and the essence-being distinction in creatures. For Scotus, divine being differs essentially from creaturely being by its infinity, as opposed to divine simplicity in Thomas's account.

We have seen that Thomas's essence-being distinction, as potency and act, accords well with the soul's capacity for being perfected, and the realisation of its *capacitas Dei*. Scotus's nearest equivalent, the common nature's 'formal distinction' from its individual instantiations as actualized by *haecceity*, seems to carry no such implication for the soul's perfectibility, even though only singulars can in fact be perfected. The *locus* of the soul's perfectibility for Scotus has to be somewhere else. It is not in the nature or essence as such, but in the will as free.

⁴²⁰ Scotus, *Ordinatio*.II,d.16,q.un.,n.12,(Olms-Wadding,VI,pt.2,768).

⁴²¹ Scotus, *Ordinatio*.II,d.16,q.un.,nn.15-17,(Olms-Wadding,VI,pt.2,770).

⁴²² Richard Cross, *Duns Scotus*, Great Medieval Thinkers, OUP,1999,45.

Scotus: The Two Affections of the Will.

Regarding the will as an indeterminate active potency, Scotus raises the question how a potency undetermined to acting or not acting can be reduced to act. He answers as follows:

I reply: there is a certain indeterminacy of insufficiency, based on potentiality and a defect of actuality, in the way, for instance, that matter without a form would be indeterminate as regards the actuation given by the form. There is another indeterminacy, however, that of a superabundant sufficiency, based on unlimited actuality, either in an unqualified or in a qualified sense...Something indeterminate in the second sense can determine itself. If this can occur where some limited actuality exists, how much more where the actuality is unlimited! ... Otherwise God, who, in virtue of his indeterminacy of unlimited actuality, is supremely undetermined in regard to any action whatsoever, would be unable to do anything of himself, which is false.⁴²³

This “indeterminacy of superabundant sufficiency”, based on unlimited actuality, is found *simpliciter* in God, and *quodammodo* (i.e. in a qualified sense) in human beings. However, this absolute power of self-determination is not found with Scotus in a completely unspecified, or untrammelled, sense. Rather, it is found in the will as embodying the soul’s natural appetite or desire. Basing himself on Anselm,⁴²⁴ Scotus divides the natural appetite into two “affections” or inclinations: firstly, the affection for the *bonum sibi*, i.e., for what is advantageous or beneficial to the self, called the *affectio commodi*; secondly, the affection for the *bonum in se*, i.e, for what is due to God, called the affection for justice, or *affectio iustitiae* – also called ‘right reason’ (*recta ratio*). The latter approximates to the natural and eternal law, inscribed in the human heart.

Scotus describes the relationship between the two affections:

..this affection for justice...is the first moderator of the affection for the beneficial (*moderatrix affectionis commodi*), inasmuch as we need not actually seek that towards which the latter affection inclines us, nor must we seek it above all else (namely, to the extent to which we are inclined by this affection for the advantageous). *This affection for what is just is the liberty innate to the will*, since it represents the first moderator of the

⁴²³ Scotus, *In Metaph.* IX, q. 15, n. 5, (Olms-Wad. IV, 798), Wolter trans., *Duns Scotus*, 153-4.

⁴²⁴ Anselm, *The Fall of the Devil*, ch. 4, (PL. 158.332-3).

affection for the advantageous ...Anselm...makes these aspects out to be *nothing other than the will itself* insofar as it is an intellective appetite [*affectio commodi*] and insofar as it is free [*affectio iustitiae*].⁴²⁵

Scotus's *affectio iustitiae* echoes the will as the *subject* of liberty in Thomas,⁴²⁶ including explicitly that liberty which Thomas refers to as "freedom from fault and unhappiness".⁴²⁷ However, there is one important difference: there is no mention now of the intellect as *cause* of this liberty. The will alone has become the *locus* of freedom in the human rational soul.

Besides "intellective appetite", Scotus also calls the *affectio commodi* the "natural will", and the *affectio iustitiae* the "will as free", underlining the fact that it is not a separate faculty, only a distinct tendency or aspect. Neither, it needs to be emphasized, is the "superabundant sufficiency", which is the principle of self-determination, either a separate faculty of the soul, or even the specific principle of freedom in the will for Scotus. The principle of the will's freedom is the *affectio iustitiae*, called the "innate liberty" of the will. It is the ability to moderate what would otherwise be the unmoderated natural and determined desires of the *affectio commodi*. Scotus explains:

..the natural will is not actually immoderate through an elicited act. For the inclination of a natural appetite is not an elicited act, but resembles the first perfection [i.e. something identical with the substance or being of the will]. And this is no more immoderate than is the nature to which it belongs. However, that nature is so inclined towards its object by this affection for the advantageous that if it had of itself an elicited act, it could not help eliciting it with no moderation in the most forceful way possible. But the natural will, as having only the affection for the beneficial, is not the cause of any elicited act; only the will as free can cause such, and therefore, *qua* eliciting act, the will does have what is required to moderate passion.⁴²⁸

A sinful act, therefore, involves a failure, by means of the *affectio iustitiae* in eliciting an act, to moderate the inclination of the *affectio commodi* with regard

⁴²⁵ Scotus, *Ordinatio* II,d.6,q.2,(*Vat.* VIII,49-50), Wolter trans., pp.469,471; my emphases.

⁴²⁶ Aquinas, *ST.* I-II.17.1.ad.2,(*Leo.* VI,118).

⁴²⁷ Aquinas, *ST.* Ia.83.2.ad.3,(*Leo.* V,309) .

⁴²⁸ Scotus, *Ordinatio*,II,d.6,q.2,(*Vat.* VIII,53), Wolter trans., *Duns Scotus*,473.

to that act. Scotus illustrates the opposite act (freedom being also a power of opposites) by the example of the good angels in not falling:

But in eliciting an act the good did not use the will as a mere intellectual appetite,⁴²⁹ by wanting happiness in the way such an appetite would want it, but made use of the will's more perfect aspect (which is liberty), by acting in a way befitting a free agent as acting freely. But this means they acted in a manner ordained by a higher will, and hence they acted justly.⁴³⁰

To act freely is, therefore, and inseparably, to act justly, i.e. to act perfectly, or "more perfectly", because "in a manner ordained by a higher will". It is also to act rationally.⁴³¹ Scotus's "voluntarism", at least in the moral context, is clearly a far cry from some later, more relativist understandings of the word. It is, however, entirely in accord with Anselm's teaching that "to be able to sin does not belong in the definition of free will", while the perfect definition is "the power of preserving the rectitude of will for its own sake".⁴³² Freedom therefore retains its character as a principle of the soul's perfectibility, as in Thomas's account.

Scotus: Moral Freedom

Scotus shares the common notion of evil as essentially a privation or deficiency of good: evil, in other words, has no being of its own. "There is no evil thing", says Thomas, "that is not in a condition of potency *falling short* of its act (*deficiente ab actu*)".⁴³³ Furthermore:

"The good is what all things desire"⁴³⁴ ...But all things, each according to its mode, desire to be in act...To be in act, therefore, constitutes the nature of the good. Hence it is that evil, which is opposed to the good, follows when potency is deprived of act...God is being in act without potency. Therefore, He is truly good.⁴³⁵

⁴²⁹ *Contra* Thomas, e.g. ST.Ia.83.4c, (Leo.V.311).

⁴³⁰ Scotus, *Ordinatio*.II,d.6,q.2, (Vat.VIII,ptbi), Wolter trans., *Duns Scotus*,475.

⁴³¹ Scotus, *In Metaph.* IX,q.15, (Olms-Wad.IV,796-802), Wolter trans., *Duns Scotus*,157.

⁴³² Anselm, *De Lib.Arbit.*,ch.13, (PL.158.505).

⁴³³ Aquinas, SCG,III.3.6, my emphasis (Leo.XIV.9).

⁴³⁴ Aristotle, *Nic.Eth.*I.1.

⁴³⁵ Aquinas, SCG I.37.4 (Leo.XIII,111).

In the Thomist perspective, the deficiency in act which constitutes evil can be understood ultimately as a failure of *desire* in one of its modes of being. The natural desire of a rational being is for happiness, that is, for its true good, its last end in God. As we have already seen,⁴³⁶ for Thomas, a free choice of a lesser good, not ordered in some way to the last end, as with the pleasure involved in an act of adultery for instance, constitutes “a privation of good according to reason”, consequently, “the result is a moral evil”.⁴³⁷ Thomas sees all evil in the perspective of nature failing to attain its term, a short-fall in active desire for the true good.⁴³⁸ In the case of moral evil, this normally involves an unwarranted diversion to a choice of some lesser good, not ordered to the greater.

Scotus sees moral evil in terms of a failure on the part of the *affectio iustitiae* to curb the immoderate desires of the *affectio commodi*. What in Thomas is a failure in ordination, or orderedness, to the good, becomes in Scotus a failure in moderation. This is, perhaps, exactly what might be expected in the case of a doctrine (Scotus's) based on the absolute priority of the appetitive power over the apprehensive. Such an act is also contrary to the perfective action of the *affectio iustitiae*, the innate liberty and rational principle of the soul: it is therefore dissonant with true freedom.

Thomas and Scotus are both compatibilists in relation to divine causality, i.e., they posit no contradiction or incompatibility between freedom in human acts and the necessary divine causality involved in God being the first and

⁴³⁶ Chapter1,p.21.

⁴³⁷ Aquinas, SCG.III.6.7,(Leo.XIV.15).

⁴³⁸ Aquinas, SCG,III.6.1,(Leo.XIV.14).

concurrent cause of those acts. The same is true of Bonaventure and Henry of Ghent. Neither in Thomas nor in Scotus, for instance, does the action of divine grace in any way threaten or cancel the soul's freedom, but enhances it. This is, in the first place, to be deduced from their accounts of the freedom of the blessed *in patria*.⁴³⁹ As we have seen in Thomas, God's universal primary causality in no way detracts from the creature's efficacy as secondary cause:

Free-will is the cause of its own movement, because by his free-will man moves himself to act. But it does not of necessity belong to liberty that what is free should be the first cause of itself, as neither for one thing to be cause of another need it be the first cause. God, therefore, is the first cause, who moves causes both natural and voluntary. And just as by moving natural causes He does not prevent their acts being natural, so by moving voluntary causes He does not deprive their actions of being voluntary: but rather is He the cause of this very thing in them; for He operates in each thing according to its own nature.⁴⁴⁰

The sphere of activity or efficacy of grace in human nature is the perfectibility of that nature by the infused *habitus* of the virtues. As with Thomas, "perfection" and "perfectibility" of nature are perhaps the key to understanding Scotus on freedom. The *habitus* of charity, already the highest on earth, is to become, by dint of its perfectibility, the highest and most perfect in heaven.⁴⁴¹ The most perfect act elicited by the will, as free, is *frui*, which, in this context, means the 'fruition' or enjoyment of God. Scotus lists four actions involving *frui* and its opposite, *uti*, based on Augustine's dictum, *Omnis perversitas, quae vitium nominatur, est uti fruendis et frui utendis*.⁴⁴²

..an act assenting to the good for its own sake is a perfect act; however, a perfect act is followed by delight...therefore an act willing the good for its own sake is followed by some delight. Therefore we have ...four distinct things: an imperfect act willing the good for the sake of something else, which is called 'use', and a perfect act willing the good for its own sake,

⁴³⁹ Aquinas: above, pp. 103-5, cf. 159; Scotus, below, pp. 123-4.

⁴⁴⁰ Aquinas, *ST*. Ia. 83. 1. ad. 3, (Leo. V. 307).

⁴⁴¹ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, IV, d. 49, q. ex latere, n. 14, (Vivès, XXI, 141).

⁴⁴² Augustine, 83 *Quaestiones*, q. 30, (PL. 40, 19).

which is called 'fruition', and a neutral act, and the delight following an act.⁴⁴³

In this case, the act of *usus*, i.e. *uti*, represents the *affectio commodi* unmoderated by the *affectio iustitiae*, therefore not ordered to the last end. The act of *fruitio* is both a perfect act and the delight which flows from it.⁴⁴⁴

Delectatio is the fulfilment of inclination or desire. Calling on Augustine again, Scotus⁴⁴⁵ says that "Fruition is to inhere in something for its own sake by love",⁴⁴⁶ and that "the fullness of joy is fruition of the Trinity".⁴⁴⁷

Scotus: Freedom and Beatitude

In the matter of willing happiness, or its opposite, *in via* (in this life), Scotus rejects Thomas's natural determination to happiness and against unhappiness in general, while evidently accepting it in practice and in particular:

I admit, then, that the will is determined to will (*volendum*) happiness and to nill (*nolendum*: will-against) misery to this extent, that if it should elicit some act with respect to these objects, it is limited and has to elicit an act of willing in regard to happiness and an act of nilling as regards misery. Nevertheless, it is not absolutely determined to elicit either the one act or the other.⁴⁴⁸

The contraries of necessity and freedom can be understood as resolved, in his own particular way, by Scotus in the life of the blessed in God. His paramount concern for indeterminacy in the will resolves itself into the perfection of the *affectio iustitiae*, the innate desire for the last end and highest happiness, in which God is given what is due to Him in justice, as *bonum propter se*. He cannot be said to have departed in any serious or significant way from

⁴⁴³ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 1, p. 2, q. 1, (Vatican, II, 51), my translation: *actus assensus bono propter se est actus perfectus; actum autem perfectum consequitur delectatio...ergo actum volendi bonum propter se consequitur aliqua delectatio. Habemus igitur...quattuor distincta: actum imperfectum volendi bonum propter aliud, qui vocatur usus, et actum perfectum volendi bonum propter se, qui vocatur fruitio, et actum neutrum, et delectationem consequentem actum.*

⁴⁴⁴ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 1, p. 2, q. 1, (Vat. II, 52).

⁴⁴⁵ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 1, p. 2, q. 1, (Vat. II, 53-4).

⁴⁴⁶ Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* I, ch. 1, (PL 34, 20).

⁴⁴⁷ Augustine, *De Trinitate* I, ch. 10, (PL 42, 751)

⁴⁴⁸ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, IV, d. 49, q. 10, (Olms-Wadding, X, 514), Wolter, 192, 193.

Thomas's vision of the last end, though he presents it rather in terms of *affectio* than of *visio*, and the route he takes is conceptually very different.

Their accounts of the freedom of the blessed *in patria* demonstrate the essential difference between the respective understandings of freedom in Thomas and Scotus. What looks to Scotus like entirely inadmissible natural necessity in Thomas's account of 'natural desire' for the last end, resolves itself *in patria* into participation in the unchanging divine nature and the immutability of eternity:

..whoever has happiness has it altogether unchangeably: this is done by the Divine power, which raises man to the participation of eternity which transcends all change.⁴⁴⁹

Also, it is by the very nature of beatitude that the soul can never lose it or not will it:

Now it is impossible for anyone seeing the Divine Essence to wish not to see it....(Because)...the vision of the Divine Essence fills the soul with all good things, since it unites it to the source of all goodness... Moreover, neither can he lose Happiness through God taking it away from him... for some fault...(since) he that sees God cannot fall into a fault, since rectitude of the will of necessity results from that vision...Because the mind that is united to God is raised above all other things: and consequently no other agent can sever the mind from that union.⁴⁵⁰

For Thomas, the safeguard and guarantee of beatitude is the nature itself of beatitude, of divinity, of eternity and of true freedom, which precludes all possibility of the intellect presenting as good something that is evil. Scotus's attitude to "the nature of things" in relation to freedom will not permit him to accept any such guarantee. For him, the soul retains its freedom for contraries, including the contraries of good and evil, virtue and sin, even in the state of beatitude. The sole guarantee of not losing beatitude is the free action of God in eternally removing the opportunity for sin and evil. This is the only sense in

⁴⁴⁹ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.5.4.ad.1*, (*Leo.VI,50*).

⁴⁵⁰ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.5.4c*, (*Leo.VI,50*).

which Scotus allows freedom to co-exist with determinism. He justifies it on the grounds that the determination of an agent by a metaphysically superior agent does not cancel the freedom of the inferior agent.⁴⁵¹ Even the beatific vision of the divine essence as such is not sufficient to cancel the soul's freedom to not-will (*non velle*) it.

Scotus also rejects Thomas's argument that the soul cannot fail to will to see the divine essence when it sees it, because it lacks nothing of goodness:

As for the reason given to support the other view, namely, that the will must necessarily love whatever possesses no aspect of evil or lack of good, I say that this is false, for the will is free with respect to any act of volition or nolition, and no object necessitates it.⁴⁵²

At the same time, because of its natural inclination to goodness and happiness, the soul cannot actually refuse or will-against (*nolle*) the beatific vision, but it can simply not-will (*non velle*) to see it.⁴⁵³ Scotus's concept of liberty clearly demands this inalienable freedom for opposites, even *in patria*; whereas Thomas's identification of the beatific vision with true and perfect freedom rules it out altogether in the matter of sin: when a soul is engaged in the activity (or actuality) for which it was created in the first place, it lacks nothing of the perfection of freedom. With Scotus, on the other hand, a significant step has been taken towards a re-definition of freedom as essentially and predominantly a bare and unspecified choice of contraries.

⁴⁵¹ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, IV, d. 49, q. 6, (Olms-Wadding, X, 428-478)

⁴⁵² Scotus, *Ordinatio*, IV, d. 49, q. 10, (Olms-Wad. X, 514), Wolter, text and trans., 192-5.

⁴⁵³ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, IV, d. 49, q. 10, (Olms-Wad. X, 514), Wolter, 194, 195.

Scotus: Divine Freedom

At the beginning of *Quodlibet* 16,⁴⁵⁴ Scotus comments on two passages from Augustine, firstly:

It was shown to our satisfaction that a mind becomes a slave of sinful desire only by its own will...if this movement is looked upon as culpable...then it is not determined by nature but is voluntary.⁴⁵⁵

If it were not voluntary, it could not be the subject of either praise or blame.

Secondly:

We do not put the life of God and the foreknowledge of God under any necessity when we say that God must live an eternal life and must know all things...When we say we must choose freely when we choose at all, what we say is true; yet we do not subject free choice to any necessity which destroys our liberty.⁴⁵⁶

The tension between freedom and necessity therefore finds its ultimate resolution in the Godhead, where the faculties of intellect (“nature”) and will (“freedom”) coexist in infinite perfection. The resolution itself finds its *locus* and ‘rationale’, so to speak, in the mystery of the Trinity, specifically in the two processions:

Thus the Son in the divine Trinity is produced by way of nature, although the productive principle be “memory” [The Father who speaks the Word]. The will, on the other hand, [Spiration of the Holy Spirit by Father And Son], always functions in its own peculiar way, viz., freely. That is why when it concurs with the intellect, as in the production of artifacts, the whole effect is said to be produced freely and intentionally, or with deliberation... [Creation is the work of all three Persons *ad extra*, and is contingent].⁴⁵⁷

Each of the intra-Trinitarian acts of generation and spiration is at the same time necessary and free. Of the perfect, because perfectly free, act of will by which God loves Himself, Scotus says:

⁴⁵⁴ Alluntis & Wolter, trans., *Scotus, Quodlibetal Questions*, 369-70.

⁴⁵⁵ Augustine, *De Lib. Arbit.* III, c. 1, nn. 2-3, (PL 32, 1271).

⁴⁵⁶ Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, c. 10, n. 1.

⁴⁵⁷ Scotus, *Quodlibet*. 16.41, (Olms-Wad. XII, 457), Alluntis and Wolter, 383, my parentheses; Cf. *Ibid.*, 16.37.

It is not self-contradictory that an infinite will have an infinite act, and hence a necessary act elicited necessarily with respect to an infinite object. Were it lacking such, it would not be supremely perfect.⁴⁵⁸

Infinite perfection involves both perfect freedom, and, necessarily, perfect Love—the Holy Spirit. At the same time, Scotus acknowledges the mystery:

If you ask how does freedom coexist with necessity, I answer with the Philosopher:⁴⁵⁹ Do not seek a reason for things for which no reason can be given: for there is no demonstration of the starting-point of demonstration.

Scotus's univocal concept of the relation between the divine and human modes of being perhaps facilitates the conclusion to be drawn from the divine perfection to the fully perfected being of man in the state of Beatitude. Here, Scotus draws on both Augustine and Anselm:

In the afterlife he will not be able to will evil, and yet he will not be deprived of his free will. In fact *his will will be much more free in that it will in no way be subject to sin*...For the will is not to be blamed nor should we say that it was no will or that it was not free, when we so will to be happy that we not only do not want to be miserable, but are quite unable to will this. Just as our soul is at present unwilling to be unhappy, so then it will forever be unwilling to be wicked.⁴⁶⁰

A passage of similar import from Anselm follows:

Whoever has what is appropriate and advantageous in such a way that it cannot be lost is freer than he who has this in such a way that it can be lost....The will, then, which cannot cease to be upright is freer.⁴⁶¹

This reflects Anselm's teaching in the same chapter of *De Libero Arbitrio* that, "to be able to sin does not belong in the definition of free will", and his conclusion in chapter 13 of the same work that, "the power of preserving the rectitude of will for its own sake is a perfect definition of free will". Clearly, Anselm's understanding of free will does not stem from a preoccupation with

⁴⁵⁸ Scotus, *Quodlibet*.16.6,(Olms-Wad.XII,446), Alluntis and Wolter,371.

⁴⁵⁹ Aristotle, *Metaph*.IV.6,(1011a12-13).

⁴⁶⁰ Augustine, *Enchiridion*,28,n.105, quoted in Scotus, *Quodlibet*,16.30,(Olms-Wad.XII,454), Alluntis and Wolter,377-8.

⁴⁶¹ Anselm, *De Lib.Arbit*.1; quoted Alluntis and Wolter,378..

freedom in the purely uncommitted sense, i.e., of an indeterminate power of choice between contraries.

OCKHAM ON FREEDOM

Intellect and Will

Ockham, in the first place, rejects Scotus' 'formal distinction' between the intellect and the will as powers of the soul (pp.56-7 above). The soul and its faculties are one and the same thing: the only difference lies in the connotations of the terms used to describe the actions concerned.⁴⁶² He also rejects the radical distinction of functions insisted on by Scotus regarding necessity (the intellect) and contingency (the will) in actions. In the first place, nothing can be willed that has not first been thought about.⁴⁶³ Secondly, acts of prudence, which are intellectual acts, are related to (other) virtuous acts as partial causes:

If you ask in what genus of cause the act of prudence stands with regard to a virtuous act...I reply that it is the efficient cause necessarily required for a virtuous act, without which it is impossible for an act to be virtuous, as long as the present divine dispensation stands,⁴⁶⁴ because the action of prudence and the action of the will are necessarily required for a virtuous act. Consequently, both of those are partial causes, together with God, of virtuous acts.⁴⁶⁵

If the causal connection with the prudential act of the intellect were to be suspended by God, the act of the will would no longer be morally appraisable.⁴⁶⁶ As it is, the intellect's causal contribution as partial cause of virtue or its opposite, in acts, is clear from Ockham's account of the relationship

⁴⁶² Ockham, *Sent.* II, q. 20, (*Theol.* V, 435); *Ordinatio*, d. 1, q. 2, (*Theol.* I, 402).

⁴⁶³ *Quaestiones Variae*, q. 8, (*Theol.* VIII, 425):...*nihil est actualiter volitum nisi actualiter apprehensum ab intellectu, et facta apprehensione statim intellectus naturaliter assentit*. Cf. *Sent.* III, q. 11, (*Theol.* VI, 364); *Quodl.* III, q. 20, (*Theol.* IX, 283-4).

⁴⁶⁴ The qualification, "as long as the present divine dispensation stands" (*stante ordinatione divina quae nunc est*), reflects Ockham's radically contingent account of divine ordinance, in morals as in all else.

⁴⁶⁵ Ockham, *Q. Var.*, q. 7, a. 3, (*Theol.* VIII, 363); Rega Wood, *Ockham on the Virtues* (*Q. Variae*. 7, with translation and commentary), West Lafayette, Indiana, Purdue University Press, 1997, p. 122, lines 510-518.

⁴⁶⁶ Ockham, *Q. Var.*, q. 8, (*Theol.* VIII, 416, 418).

between erroneous conscience, or error in the intellect, and culpability.⁴⁶⁷ The agent is obliged to be in possession of an informed conscience, and to exercise 'right reason' in moral choices, to the extent of his or her capability.

Nevertheless, Ockham is in accord with Scotus, and, in fact, with Aquinas (p.90 above), that no contribution of the intellect actually determines the will, as then the will's action would not be in the agent's power, so would not be imputable.⁴⁶⁸ Also, determination of the will by the intellect would make the will a passive power. It is, after all, the will that makes the act of choice, and in the last analysis:

In producing an act of will, the will no more depends on the intellect than the sensitive appetite depends on the cognitive faculty; but the sensitive appetite need only be shown an object in order to produce an act; it can act without any judgment or dictate [of reason]; therefore, so much more the will.⁴⁶⁹

Ockham ascribes no freedom to the intellect itself, even though it is not coerced:

Because freedom is distinguished in one way from coercion, and in this way it is understood improperly, because in this way freedom can be attributed to the intellect.⁴⁷⁰

Ockham: Freedom of Indifference

Ockham's understanding of freedom can be gauged from his interpretation of Anselm's account in *De Libero Arbitrio*. As noted by Thomas (p.101 above) and Scotus (p.120 above), for Anselm, the ability to sin does not enter into the definition of freedom. Ockham adverts to this in a question concerning freedom

⁴⁶⁷ Ockham, *Q. Var.*, q.8, (*Theol.* VIII, 409-411, 429-30).

⁴⁶⁸ Ockham, *Q. Var.*, q.7, a.3, (*Theol.* VIII, 369); Wood, *Virtues*, 123-5.

⁴⁶⁹ Ockham, *Q. Var.*, q.7, a.3, (*Theol.* VIII, 368); Wood, *Virtues*, 131.

⁴⁷⁰ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.1, q.6, (*Theol.* I, 501), my trans.: *Quia libertas uno modo distinguitur a coactione, et sic accipitur impropriissime, quia isto modo potest competere intellectui.*

in the Trinity,⁴⁷¹ and in opposition to Scotus,⁴⁷² who had quoted Anselm as follows:

“Whoever has what is appropriate and advantageous in such a way that it cannot be lost is freer than he who has this in such a way that it can be lost”. From this he concludes: “The will then which cannot cease to be upright is freer”.⁴⁷³

Scotus is quoting Anselm here in connection with the freedom of the blessed *in patria*. Ockham in his reply distinguishes the *servitus culpa et poenae*, whose existence he has acknowledged,⁴⁷⁴ from freedom of indifference:

I say that he (Anselm) does not mean that he who wills necessarily wills freely what he wills, but that the will which can never depart from rectitude is freer, because it cannot now serve sin... And therefore the one who is more free from the servitude of sin is also freer from coercion with respect to other acts arising from acts of willing and nilling (*nollendi*). And on account of this to be able to sin is neither freedom (*libertas*) nor part of freedom, but rather diminishes freedom; it does not, however, diminish freedom from coercion with respect to interior acts of willing and nilling; therefore it diminishes the other freedom of which Anselm speaks in the same place.⁴⁷⁵

Ockham interprets Anselm as meaning that it is the freedom from the *servitus culpa et poenae* alone that is diminished by the power to sin, and into whose definition the power to sin does not enter:⁴⁷⁶

From this it follows that, according to Anselm’s way of speaking, the freedom of the will can be diminished. And yet neither the interior state of the will nor the will itself can be diminished, just as it cannot be increased. Therefore he understands this of a freedom other than that by which the will wills whatever it wills voluntarily.⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷¹ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.10, q.2, (*Theol.* III, 330-344).

⁴⁷² Scotus, *Quodlibet*. 16.8, (Olms-Wadding, XII, 454), Alluntis, 378.

⁴⁷³ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.10, q.2, (*Theol.* III, 331-2); Anselm, *De Libero Arbitrio*, c.1, (PL 158, 491).

⁴⁷⁴ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.1, q.6, (*Theol.* I, 501).

⁴⁷⁵ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.10, q.2, (*Theol.* III, 342-3), my trans.: *...ad Anselmum dico quod non intelligit quod libere velit illud quod necessario vult, sed quod voluntas quae a rectitudine declinare nequit est liberior, quia iam non potest servire peccato... Et ideo eo ipso quod a servitute peccati est liberior, est etiam a coactione, quantum ad actus alios ab actibus volendi et nolendi, liberior. Et propter hoc posse peccare nec est libertas nec pars libertatis, sed magis minuit libertatem; non tamen minuit libertatem a coactione quantum ad actus intrinsecos volendi et nolendi; ergo minuit aliam libertatem de qua loquitur Anselmus ibidem.*

⁴⁷⁶ Anselm, *De Lib. Arbit.*, c.1

⁴⁷⁷ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.10, q.2, (*Theol.* III, 343), my trans.: *Ex isto sequitur quod libertas voluntatis, secundum modum loquendi Anselmi, potest minui. Et tamen condicio intrinseca voluntati nec voluntas ipsa potest minui sicut nec potest augeri. Igitur intelligit de alia libertate quam de illa qua voluntas quidquid vult voluntarie vult.*

The “freedom by which the will wills whatever it wills voluntarily”, which by its very nature excludes necessity, corresponds to what is Ockham’s definition of freedom: a bare, unspecified and uncoerced choice between contraries. He makes no reference here to what is actually Anselm’s definition of freedom: “the power to preserve justice, or ‘rectitude of will’, for its own sake”.⁴⁷⁸ While this is certainly implied in ‘freedom from the *servitus culpae et poenae*’, it also signifies far more, namely, the action of grace and the virtues. This was the major element in Thomas’s account of freedom and finality, without which it would be incoherent. Scotus, too, had embraced it, in a rather more circumscribed form, in his account of the *affectio iustitiae*.

Marilyn Adams observes that “Ockham does not follow Scotus’ lead in trying to construct the will’s freedom out of its two-fold inclination for good and against evil”.⁴⁷⁹ He does, however, agree with Scotus that the will has non-necessitating inclinations which can be called “natural” in the Ockhamist sense that they pertain to the individual will itself as individual.⁴⁸⁰ Therefore the will is not subject to coercion, which would entail being forced to act contrary to its natural inclinations.⁴⁸¹ Ockham does acknowledge that the inclinations to pleasure and against its opposite can be so strong as to require a heroic choice against them.⁴⁸² However, as Adams observes, “he barely mentions the Anselmian double affections for the advantageous and for justice”⁴⁸³ adopted by Scotus, and then only to point out that corresponding to each *velle* is a disinclination

⁴⁷⁸ Anselm, *De Lib.Arbit.*cc.3,13.

⁴⁷⁹ Marilyn McCord Adams, *The Structure of Ockham’s Moral Theory*, Franciscan Studies 46,1986,1-35,13.

⁴⁸⁰ Ockham, *Sent.*II,q.15,(*Theol.*V,351);*Sent.*IV,q.16,(*Theol.*VII,353);*Ordinatio*,d.1,q.3,(*Theol.*I,410).

⁴⁸¹ Ockham, *Sent.*II,q.15,(*Theol.*V,351,355).

⁴⁸² Ockham, *Q.Var.*7,a.2,(*Theol.*VIII,pp.336-7); Wood, *Virtues*,82-5.

⁴⁸³ Adams, *Structure*,13.

(*nolle*) to its opposite, and that the will acts in accord with these two affections (the one tempered by the other, so to speak) when it follows the dictates of right reason.

On the other hand, Ockham decisively rejects Scotus's identification of the *affectio iustitiae* with the liberty of the will. It does not accord with the notion of freedom as essentially 'indifferent'. Neither does any form of natural teleology accord with freedom. Here, he does accept Scotus's radical disjunction between 'nature' and will. Anything suggesting natural necessity threatens the imputability of acts, an issue that looms very large in Ockham's moral doctrine. Ockham rejects Aristotle's theory of natural inclinations, because of the element of necessity it attributes to them. He believes himself to be following philosophical tradition when he contends that the will's liberty is that of indifference and contingency:

And thus freedom is a certain indifference and contingency, and is distinguished from a natural active principle. And in this way the philosophers speak of freedom and will,...and...those who have free will have dominion and power over their acts, but this is not without indifference and contingency.⁴⁸⁴

The word 'indifference' (*indifferentia*) occurs seldom in Thomas, and not at all in connection with free will or freedom.⁴⁸⁵ Since Ockham's particular concerns are unlikely to have been those of Aristotle or Plato, Avicenna or Averroes, his claimed support from "the philosophers" also looks tenuous.

Ockham enlarges the definitive realm of freedom to embrace the possibility to act *contrary* to the dictates of right reason, consciously and deliberately, in

⁴⁸⁴ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.1, q.6, (*Theol.* I, 501-2), my trans.: *Et sic libertas est quaedam indifferentia et contingentia, et distinguitur contra principium activum naturale. Et sic utuntur philosophi libertate et voluntate...et...illa quae habent liberum arbitrium habent dominium et potestatem super actus suos; sed hoc non est sine indifferentia et contingentia.*

⁴⁸⁵ *Index Thomisticus* and Roy J. Deferrari, *Lexicon of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Loreto, NH, 2004.

virtually all circumstances. Freedom becomes, in essence, the *experience* of possibility, regardless of the nature of the possible. Some interesting consequences flow from this. For one thing, Scotus's metaphysical concept of 'instants of nature' or 'synchronic contingency', which was designed precisely to eliminate every trace of perceived necessity in acts of the will, is easily dismissed by Ockham as logically contradictory, and outside the possibility of actual experience.⁴⁸⁶

Ockham: Freedom and Finality

Ockham takes up Scotus's principle of the "superabundant sufficiency" of the will as a power for opposites. He then transforms it into his own doctrine of "freedom of indifference": "the will can by its liberty – apart from any other determination by act or habit – elicit or not elicit that act or its opposite".⁴⁸⁷ That is, it can elect to do it, or not to do it, or to 'nill' it, which is to do the opposite. He also takes up, to be interpreted in his own way, the Anselmian object tendencies (*affectio commodi* and *affectio iustitiae*) in the will,⁴⁸⁸ as well as the tendencies evoked by sensory pleasure and acquired habits.⁴⁸⁹ However, as Adams explains,

He denies that any inclination is *natural*, either in the sense of defining the will's scope or in the sense of causally determining its actions. Where others (including Anselm, Aquinas, and even Scotus) allow the will's object tendencies to define the proper object of willing as good and of nilling as bad or evil, Ockham lets the will's self-determining power plus the agent's intellectual capacities define the will's scope...For created wills, the scope of each willing and nilling is delineated by what the agent's intellect can

⁴⁸⁶ *Tractatus de Praedestinatione et de Praescientia Dei et de Futuris Contingentibus*, q.3 (*Philos.* II, 535); Also, Franciscan Institute Publications no.2, 1945, 32-36.

⁴⁸⁷ Ockham, *Sent.* IV, q.16, (*Theol.* VII, 359).

⁴⁸⁸ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.1, q.6 (*Theol.* I, 502).

⁴⁸⁹ Ockham, *Sent.* III, q.7, (*Theol.* VI, 209-10).

conceive of. Moreover, no matter how strong, none causally determines the will's choice.⁴⁹⁰ In these twin senses, willpower is a *neutral* potency.⁴⁹¹

We choose our own ends. Nature no longer has anything to tell us of a final end in God.

Ockham's dismissal of purposiveness or teleology in nature rests essentially on 1) his radical singularism, which I venture to call his "metaphysics of separation and isolation". This in turn forms an essential plank in 2) his account of the *potentia absoluta Dei*. Ockham clearly associates causal connections with necessity. In a question as to whether practical and speculative knowledge are to be distinguished by ends or means, Ockham criticizes Henry of Ghent for characterizing practical and speculative statements in terms of their distinctive final causes. This is to posit an unwarranted causal connection or determination, in Ockham's view.⁴⁹² Ockham's "metaphysics of separation" extends also to propositions. He even claims that acts of intellect and will can exist without a subject, by God's absolute power:

..it is no more a contradiction that an absolute spiritual accident should be without a subject by the power of God than in the case of a corporeal accident, because one is no more dependent on a subject than the other.⁴⁹³

and that acts of will could take place without a person knowing the objects of those acts:

..delight (*dilectio*) is related (only) contingently to knowledge in general, because it can exist without any knowledge, albeit by the power of God, not naturally.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹⁰ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.1, q.2, (*Theol.* I, 399): *...quia voluntas non potest necessitari respectus cuiuscumque*.

⁴⁹¹ Ockham, *Sent.* III, q.6, (*Theol.* VI, 174-6); cf. *Quodl.* IV, q.1, (*Theol.* IX, 300).

⁴⁹² Ockham, *Ordinatio*, Prol., q.11, (*Theol.* I, 321-22); Henry of Ghent, *Summa Quaestionum Ordinarum*, a.36, q.4.ad.2.

⁴⁹³ Ockham, *Sent.* IV, q.9, (*Theol.* VII, 155).

⁴⁹⁴ Ockham, *Sent.* IV, q.6, (*Theol.* VII, 91).

The same principle applies to the final end itself; the Beatific Vision could be without *fruitio*, since the one is logically prior to the other.⁴⁹⁵ Furthermore, a person in this situation,

..seeing the divine essence and lacking beatific fruition can 'nill' (*potest nolle*, i.e. can will-against) that fruition...[and]...can 'nill' God.⁴⁹⁶

Finally, in accordance with the *potentia absoluta Dei*, the Blessed could also hate God, because:

..whatever can be a rightful act in this world, can also be one in the next (*in patria*). But to hate God can be a rightful act in this world, albeit if God commands it, therefore also *in patria*.⁴⁹⁷

Ockham's account of God's absolute power to alter the moral status of actions without altering the actions themselves rests on his understanding of the distinction between the act itself and the moral value of the act:

God can cause any absolute thing without anything else which is not identical with that absolute thing. But the act of hating God, in respect of anything absolute in it, is not identical with the deformity and malice in the act, therefore God can cause whatever is absolute in the act of hating or not-willing God, without causing any deformity or malice in the act.⁴⁹⁸

The implications of the *potentia absoluta Dei*, as described by Ockham, for the teleological account of nature, and indeed for nature in general, are fatal.

David Clark summarizes the situation as follows:

His arguments about the causal classification of propositions show his systematic effort to eradicate natural and intrinsic finality from non-rational beings. It is appropriate to ask "why" people act in a certain manner but...The natures of impersonal entities do not contain their ends; they simply reveal a regularity and pattern of function. Ockham's approach to physics is somewhat mechanistic. As a moralist, consequently, he refuses to make *a priori* judgments about the goals or ends served by certain actions. As Ockham turns his back on "Nature which acts like an intelligent

⁴⁹⁵ Ockham, *Sent*, IV, q. 16, (*Theol.* VII, 351).

⁴⁹⁶ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d. 1, q. 6, (*Theol.* I, 505).

⁴⁹⁷ Ockham, *Sent*, IV, q. 16, (*Theol.* VII, 352).

⁴⁹⁸ Ockham, *Sent*, II, q. 15, (*Theol.* V, 342), my trans.: *Deus potest omne absolutum causare sine omni alio quod non est idem cum illo absoluto. Sed actus odiendi Deum quantum ad omne absolutum in eo non est idem cum deformitate et malitia in actu, igitur Deus potest causare quidquid absolutum est in actu odiendi Deum vel nolendi, non causando aliquam deformitatem vel malitiam in actu.*

craftsman” he also closes the door to moral theories based upon the teleological organisation and connection of nature.⁴⁹⁹

All finality in rational creatures is merely a matter of the individual’s own chosen purpose at the time in taking any action: nothing more. We choose our own ends, including the final end in God – or not, or the opposite. Freedom of indifference is indifferent to all ends whatever; it does not allow for a ‘natural’ finality in the Aristotelian/Thomist sense. Ockham argues that if the human will were inclined by nature to some object, or some mode of conceiving objects, then the opposite mode or object would be unnatural for the will, in the sense of doing violence to its nature.⁵⁰⁰ The only determining factor Ockham will accept in the will is the one that is already, itself, primarily in the power of the will, namely the will’s own anterior habit-forming acts or decisions.⁵⁰¹

Aquinas claims that the will is determined by the ultimate end, a determination which manifests itself in the natural inclination to the good in general (the *bonum in commune*), but free in its choice of means. Scotus teaches that both the end and the means are freely elicited by a contingent principle, whose liberty he identifies with the *affectio iustitiae*. Scotus’s ‘freedom’ is not indifferent. He upholds the Anselmian principle that freedom is the ability to maintain justice, and does not include the ability to sin. Ockham agrees with Scotus that freedom and necessity are “opposite modes of originating”, but applies the principle in his own way, attributing some necessity even to the will, and re-interpreting freedom as indifferent to all considerations whatever of ‘good’ or ‘evil’. For the first time ever, a choice of good and a choice of evil are placed on an identical footing vis-à-vis freedom.

⁴⁹⁹ David W. Clark, *William of Ockham on Right Reason*, *Speculum*, 48, no. 1, 1973, 13-36, 20, n. 17.

⁵⁰⁰ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d. 1, q. 6, (*Theol.* I, 507).

⁵⁰¹ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d. 1, q. 6, (*Theol.* I, 494).

To be fair to Ockham, it is necessary to point out that there is no question of his having regarded the freedom to sin as something to be taken advantage of. His basic theological project is to delineate the (all but unlimited) scope of divine freedom. With regard to human beings, what today would be called freedom Ockham describes as the liberty of mutability. It is no great advantage. It does not give us a licence to surrender to concupiscence whenever it suits us. Neither does it free us from the possibility of coercion. Rather it exposes us to sin and misery.⁵⁰²

Ockham: Freedom and Beatitude

God, whose concurrence is active in all causality whatever, can dispense with secondary causality, in volitions as well as all else. He can intervene to be the total efficient cause of a creature's volition. In a question concerning the eternal disposition of the fallen angels, Ockham says:

I say that God can be the total cause of acts of the will, for example with regard to love of God, and hatred, just as he can be a total cause in the case of a stone or of a man, because anything of which he can be a partial cause, he can also be a total cause.⁵⁰³

And this is so in the case of the blessed in eternity:

For in the blessed the acts of seeing as much as of loving God are caused solely by God as total cause, and in no way by the intellect or will as partial causes. And this act of love is formally opposed to every sinful act...And for as long as this act is totally conserved by God – just as it is caused by God – so long is it confirmed, so that in no way, even by the absolute power of the created will, can it yield to a sinful act...But the will cannot be said to be

⁵⁰² See *Sent.* II, q. 15, (*Theol.* V, 354-6). I owe this observation to Rega Wood, *Ockham on the Virtues*, West Lafayette, Purdue University Press, 1997, 35.

⁵⁰³ Ockham, *Sent.* II, q. 15, (*Theol.* V, 350), my translation: *...dico quod Deus potest esse causa totalis respectu actus in voluntate, puta respectu dilectionis Dei et odii, sicut potest esse causa totalis respectu lapidis vel hominis, quia cuiuscumque potest esse causa partialis, potest esse totalis.*

forced in this, because the will formally wills and delights in that act, even though it does not cause it.⁵⁰⁴

While denying the presence of any force or coercion, Ockham will not – indeed cannot – go so far as to allow ‘freedom’ to be ascribed to the state of beatitude, except in the sense of freedom *from* the *servitus culpa*, *miseriae et poenae*, the triple punishment of the reprobate: “And in this way the blessed are more free than *viatores*”.⁵⁰⁵ Yet, while inability to sin rules out freedom of indifference in the sense defined by Ockham *in via*, it does not rule out the kind of ‘indifference’ involved in freedom of exercise, as between one good act and another, or acting as opposed to not acting.⁵⁰⁶ Ockham clarifies this in the case of good angels, and its opposite in the wicked angels.⁵⁰⁷ However, in contrast to Thomas and Scotus, Ockham allows that the will can both not-will and will-against beatitude, *in patria* as well as *in via*, although willing-against *in patria* evidently depends on God “suspending the will’s activity with respect to willing (*volitio*)”, so that the beatific act can become an object of willing-against (*nolitio*).⁵⁰⁸

In the case of the fallen angels (and the damned), they are not free from the *servitus culpa et poenae*, but they are “free” from the divine *coactio* and *immutabilitas* involved in the life of the Blessed. Consequently, the demons are free to tempt human beings.

⁵⁰⁴ *Sent.* II, q. 15 (*Theol.* V, p. 341), my translation: *Nam in beatis causatur tam actus videndi Deum quam diligendi eum a solo Deo tanquam a totali causa et nullo modo ab intellectu vel voluntate sicut a causis partialibus. Et iste actus dilectionis formaliter opponitur omni actui peccati... Et ideo quamdiu iste actus conservatur totaliter a Deo – sicut ab ipso causatur – tamdiu est confirmatus, ita quod nullo modo, etiam de potentia absoluta voluntatis creatae, potest in actum peccati... Sed ex hoc non dicitur voluntas cogi, quia voluntas formaliter vult et diligit illo actu, licet non causetur ab eo.*

⁵⁰⁵ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d. 1, q. 6, (*Theol.* I, 501).

⁵⁰⁶ Cf. Aquinas, *ST.* Ia. 62.8.ad2, (p. 105 above).

⁵⁰⁷ Ockham, *Sent.* II, q. 15, (*Theol.* V, 345).

⁵⁰⁸ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d. 1, q. 6, (*Theol.* I, 506-7).

Ockham: Divine Freedom and *Potentia Absoluta*

Ockham's insistence on the divine power to cause intuition of non-existents⁵⁰⁹ is actually central to his ontology, as it involves separation of ontological absolutes such as the individual character of both the mental act and the object of knowledge. Intuitive vision, whether sensitive or intellectual, is distinct from its object as to subject and place. Consequently, by the *potentia absoluta Dei*, one thing can exist, be conserved, or be destroyed, without affecting the other. It can be seen that, in the process of justifying his premise concerning the intuition of non-existents, Ockham introduces another theological principle regarding divine omnipotence. He declares that God knows *intuitively* both creatures that exist and those that do not yet exist – that is to say, he knows each individually, as a singular. M.Pernoud describes this, justifiably I think, as

..a reciprocal insuring of both God's freedom and ontological individualism. The fact that God is free demands absolute singularity...In this way, a metaphysics of the absolutely singular individual could apply to any states of affairs God might possibly choose to create, and no theories of causal relations need hamper either God's freedom or man's certainty.⁵¹⁰

In concert with this is Ockham's insistence on the singularity of both the mental act and the object known. He attributes abstractive cognition to a *habitus*, not to species, and asserts that species are superfluous.⁵¹¹ All that is necessary for both intuitive and abstractive cognition is the object and the act:

There is no need to posit species for the purpose of representation: because in intuitive knowledge, no representation is required other than the object and the act...therefore neither in abstractive knowledge, which follows immediately on intuitive, is there required anything other than the object and the act.⁵¹²

⁵⁰⁹ *Ordinatio*, Prol.1,q.1,(*Theol.*I,39), Boehner,trans.,*Ockham*,24; *Quodlibet*,VI,q.6, (*Theol.*IX,604-607), Freddoso,506-8.

⁵¹⁰ Mary Anne Pernoud, *Innovation in William of Ockham's References to the "Potentia Dei"*, *Antonianum* 45,1970,65-97,84.

⁵¹¹ *Sent.*II,q.13 (*Theol.*V,272): *Omnia illa, quae possunt salvari per speciem, possunt salvari per habitum; ergo habitus requiritur et species superfluit.*

⁵¹² *Sent.*II,q.13 (*Theol.*V,273-4),my trans.: *Nec debet species poni propter repraesentationem, quia in notitia intuitiva non requiritur aliquod repraesentans, aliud ab obiecto et actu...Igitur nec in abstractiva quae immediate sequitur intuitivam requiritur aliud praeter obiectum et actum.*

And between those two ontological absolutes there is no necessary connection, as God, by his *potentia absoluta*, can even produce the act without the object. Ockham is far indeed from sharing Scotus's concern about the connection between being and thought.

Conclusion to Chapter 2

The concept of human freedom as essentially a bare, unspecified and unimpeded choice between contraries, in which the element of imputability or accountability for one's actions is seen as the principle of main concern, clearly sits uncomfortably with an idea of freedom understood as primarily a possession of a soul as sanctified, and a principle of the soul's perfectibility. The former can conceivably be appropriated or contrived by man, the latter has to be received from God. In the case of Bonaventure, the latter account, Thomas's, clearly presents little problem for his understanding of the relationship between free will and grace (p.105 above). Bonaventure also retains the emphasis on inclination or desire, especially in the *Itinerarium*, though stressing the will and affectivity rather than nature as such.

Scotus's Anselmian concept of the will as *affectio iustitiae*, and as the 'innate liberty' of the soul (pp.118-9 above), and his association of perfection with indeterminism and the complete independence of the will (p.117 above), can be held to go some way toward accommodating both these 'paradigms' of freedom. For Ockham, however, it is clear that the notion of freedom as a principle of perfectibility presents him with insurmountable problems, firstly because of the dignity and finality it accords to nature, secondly because it cannot be squared with an account which places sinful acts and virtuous acts

on an identical basis vis-à-vis freedom (p.136 above). The latter has been achieved, firstly, by his establishment of divine freedom of indifference, and secondly, by attributing the same mode of freedom to human beings.

In virtue of the *potentia absoluta Dei*, and in the interests of maximizing divine freedom, Ockham has posited radical separations between objects that normally exist in conjunction as pairs: for instance, between acts of intellect and will and their subjects and objects (p.134 above), between acts or statements and their final causes (p.134 above), between acts and the moral value of acts (p.135 above), between the Beatific Vision and fruition, or enjoyment of God (p.138 above), and in fact between cause and effect wherever he finds it. In each case, God can create the one without the other, or annihilate one without in any way affecting the other. In the next chapter, we will see how this “metaphysic of separation” affects his account of grace. Ockham’s earthly freedom of indifference, which can have no place in Beatitude (p.138 above), as it has no intrinsic connection with the soul’s perfectibility, must raise serious doubts concerning the nature and working of grace in the human soul.

Chapter Three

Freedom and Grace: Grace as Principle of the Operation of Finality

Introduction

As long as free will is admitted, and utilitarianism excluded, two great lines of thought present themselves from which moral principles can be deduced: the teleological, based on the idea of the ultimate end or good of the moral subject, and the deontological, based on the natural law and divine command, seen predominantly in terms of justice, or what is due to another, especially to God. These two approaches are by no means mutually exclusive. However, the theological 'watershed' represented by the Paris 'Condemnations' of 1270 and 1277, seems in practice to have brought about a decisive swing from an emphasis on the teleological, epitomised by Aquinas, to a newer and much enlarged emphasis on the deontological, as manifested by Scotus and Ockham.

As already pointed out in chapter 2, what is at issue is the very source itself of human flourishing, of which Aquinas's perception leads him to speak in terms of inclination and connaturality, virtue and happiness, rather than in terms of commandments or precepts. The difference between the two perceptions, though each is valid in its own terms, is bound to affect understanding of the way grace works.

In Aristotelian philosophy, as we have seen (Chapter 1), the "nature" of a thing, the kind of thing it is, is determined by the end or goal of its existence. It is the essence of a thing precisely as in motion towards its final end, which is its perfection. Therefore, "nature" is inseparable from "finality". Every action of a

living being has an end or goal perceived as “good” to be attained. Aristotle identifies as the ultimate good for rational beings something chosen for its own sake, and not for the sake of something else. Only “happiness” meets this criterion.⁵¹³

Similarly, the link between nature and happiness/finality gave rise to another tenet of the ancient Greek schools: that which translates into Latin as ‘*sequi naturam*’: the invariable laws or actions of a nature, as such, are seen as reliable guides to that nature’s perfection, and in the case of rational natures, to the fulfilment which terminates in happiness, which all desire. In this common agreement of otherwise very diverse schools of thought, the “natural law” bears witness to itself. St. Paul clearly recognized it present there in the pagan world in his letter to the Romans;

So, when gentiles, not having the Law, still through their own innate sense behave as the Law commands, then, even though they have no Law, they are a law for themselves. They can demonstrate the effect of the Law engraved on their hearts, to which their own conscience bears witness; since they are aware of various considerations, some of which accuse them, while others provide them with a defence...(Romans 2:14-15).

This passage, which equates the Law “engraved in the hearts” of all men with the Decalogue, thus identifies the Decalogue as natural law in its fullest expression. One can go further, and say that, in virtue of the context in which the Decalogue was given to Israel – the sealing of a unique familial covenant with God – this passage from Paul identifies the natural law engraved in their hearts as the sign of a supernatural call and finality for all men, involving intimacy with the divine.

⁵¹³ Aristotle, *Nic.Ethics*, I.7.

AQUINAS ON GRACE

In Scripture, the end or goal of man is that direct relationship between God and His people given expression in Covenant and Law. Therefore, natural law, the “law of our nature”, is ordered to salvation, even though the attainment of salvation requires the additional aid of divine revelation and grace. All creatures give glory to God by acting in accordance with their own natures, towards their purposed goal. Man alone, being rational, has the capability to reflect upon his own nature and to share in a far greater manner in divine providence by being himself a provider:

Now among all others, the rational creature is subject to divine providence in the most excellent way, in so far as it partakes of a share of providence, by being provident both for itself and for others. Wherefore it has a share of the Eternal Reason, whereby it has a natural inclination to its proper act and end: and this participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is called the natural law.⁵¹⁴

For Thomas, there is no reason to suppose, as a much later age (under Lutheran and Calvinist influence) would suppose, that the “evangelical law” of the Gospel, summed up in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), somehow dispenses man from the requirement to reflect upon his own nature in relation to God. The Apostles and Fathers of the Church certainly supposed no such thing – quite the reverse, as that nature has been raised to an incomparable dignity by the Incarnation.

Aquinas: Friendship with God

The classical tenet *sequi naturam*, referred to above, finds its true significance for Christian faith in the Incarnation. In a chapter concerning the ‘suitability’ (*convenientia*) of the Incarnation, Thomas points out that, for a creature with natural finality for a beatitude beyond its natural capacity to attain, the infinite

⁵¹⁴ Aquinas, ST.I-II.91.2c,(Leo.VII,154).

distance between the divine and human natures must lead to despair, if it were not for the Incarnation and what it tells us of human dignity:

For, since the perfect beatitude of man consists in the enjoyment of God alone, ...necessarily every man is kept from participation in the true beatitude who cleaves as to an end to those things which are less than God. But man was able to be misled into this clinging as to an end to things less than God in existence by his *ignorance of the worthiness of his nature*. Thus it happens with some. They look on themselves in their bodily and sentient nature – which they have in common with other animals – and in bodily things and fleshly pleasures they seek out a kind of animal beatitude.⁵¹⁵

Others, he tells us, adopt the opposite attitude and worship things they perceive to be greater than themselves: “the universe and its parts...(or) angels and demons”. Whereas, in fact, in the order of ends, nothing stands higher than man except God, “in whom alone man’s perfect beatitude is to be found,” in the immediate vision of God.⁵¹⁶ This superlative dignity of man was “most suitably (*convenientissime*) manifested by God by his own immediate assumption of human nature”.⁵¹⁷ A result of the Incarnation is also the real possibility of human friendship and intimacy with God:

Furthermore, since friendship consists in a certain equality, things greatly unequal seem unable to be coupled in friendship. Therefore, to get greater familiarity in friendship between man and God it was helpful for man that God became man, since even by nature man is man’s friend; and so in this way, while we know God visibly, we may be borne to love of things invisible.⁵¹⁸

We can deduce from this that, since friendship with God is made possible by a certain identity of nature, or connaturality, with God-made-man, resulting from the Incarnation, anything that destroys this friendship must have implications for human nature too. Since the virtues dispose us for beatitude, to which natural desire inclines us, sin must have the opposite effect:

⁵¹⁵ Aquinas, SCG.IV,54.3,(Leo.XV,173), O’Neil trans.,228, my emphasis.

⁵¹⁶ Concerning the angels, Thomas says that “although superior to man in the order of nature, (they) are not superior in the order of end, because the same end beatifies them”: SCG.IV.54.9,(Leo.XV,175), O’Neil,232.

⁵¹⁷ Aquinas, SCG.IV.54.3,(Leo.XV,173).

⁵¹⁸ Aquinas, SCG.IV.54.6,(Leo.XV,174), O’Neil,231.

..it not only induces a kind of disorder in the soul by seducing it from its due end, but it also offends God to whom we look for the reward of beatitude... What is more, man, being aware of this offence, loses by sin that confidence in approaching God which is necessary to achieve beatitude.⁵¹⁹

Divine intimacy is restored only by grace-making-pleasing (*gratia gratum faciens*), assimilating the soul to the divine likeness revealed in the Son.

Aquinas: The Operations of Grace

Adam and Eve, even before sin and its resulting loss of grace, were *viatores*; that is to say, although created in a state of friendship with God, they still had to attain, by co-operation with the resplendent graces received, their ultimate perfection and glorification in the Beatific Vision. This ‘incompleteness’ of the state of original holiness and justice is given expression by Aquinas, quoting Augustine, in a text concerning the grace of perseverance:

As Augustine says,⁵²⁰ *in the original state man received a gift whereby he could persevere, but to persevere was not given him. But now, by the grace of Christ, many receive both the gift of grace whereby they may persevere, and the further gift of persevering, and thus Christ’s gift is greater than Adam’s fault. Nevertheless it was easier for man to persevere with the gift of grace in the state of innocence in which the flesh was not rebellious against the spirit, than it is now. For the restoration by Christ’s grace, although it is already begun in the mind, is not yet completed in the flesh, as it will be in heaven, where man will not merely be able to persevere but will be unable to sin.*⁵²¹

Man before the Fall still needed grace to obtain eternal life. This is *gratia elevans*, the grace which ‘raises up’ to attain what is beyond the power of unaided human nature. The need for *gratia elevans* was no less in the “state of perfect nature” (as Thomas calls original holiness) than in the “state of corrupted nature” after the Fall. Only now, after the Fall, grace is also needed to bring forgiveness and healing (*gratia sanans*):

⁵¹⁹ Aquinas, SCG.IV.54.8,(Leo.XV,174), O’Neil,231.

⁵²⁰ Augustine, *De Natura et Gratia* XLIII.

⁵²¹ Aquinas, ST.I-II.109.10 ad.3,(Leo.VII,309).

After sin man requires grace for more things than before sin; but he does not need grace more: forasmuch as man even before sin required grace to obtain eternal life, which is the chief reason for the need of grace. But after sin man required grace also for the remission of sin, and for the support of his weakness.⁵²²

Concupiscence (as *fomes peccati*) remains for us to wrestle with and gain merit,⁵²³ in co-operation with *gratia sanans*. Thomas adopts Augustine's distinction between *gratia operans* and *gratia co-operans*,⁵²⁴ as well as the gratuity of the initial, operative, grace (*gratia praeveniens*):

As grace is divided into operating and co-operating, with regard to its diverse effects, so also is it divided into prevenient and subsequent, howsoever we consider grace. Now there are five effects of grace in us: of these, the first is to heal the soul; the second, to desire good; the third, to carry into effect the good proposed; the fourth, to persevere in good; the fifth, to reach glory... And this is what Augustine says⁵²⁵: *It is prevenient, inasmuch as it heals, and subsequent, inasmuch as, being healed, we are strengthened; it is prevenient, inasmuch as we are called, and subsequent, inasmuch as we are glorified.*⁵²⁶

Similarly significant is the distinction between the grace of justification (*gratia iustificans*), which comes to us in the first place at baptism, and the grace of sanctification (*gratia gratum faciens*). The first restores us to friendship with God, and is instantaneous⁵²⁷; the second, also called habitual grace, prepares us for the *lumen gloriae*, and is on-going through life. Thomas regards the justification of the sinner as God's greatest work, greater even than the act of creation *ex nihilo*.⁵²⁸ The immediate effect of justification on the soul, Thomas describes as "a sort of spiritual enlightenment",⁵²⁹ and

..by Baptism man is born again unto the spiritual life (and)...incorporated in Christ, as one of His members. – Again, just as the members derive sense and movement from the material head, so from their spiritual Head, Christ, do His members derive spiritual sense consisting in the knowledge of truth, and spiritual movement which results from the instinct of grace. Hence it is

⁵²² Aquinas, *ST.Ia.95.4 ad.1*, (Leo.V,424); cf. *Sent.II,d.29,q.1,a.4*, (Mandonnet II,750).

⁵²³ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.95.4.ad.2*, (Leo.V,425); cf. *obj.2* and *2 Tim.2:5*.

⁵²⁴ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.111.2c*, (Leo.VII,318); *De Veritate*, XXVII.5.ad 1, (Leo.XXII, Vol.3,810).

⁵²⁵ Augustine, *De Natura et Gratia*, XXXI, (PL.44,264).

⁵²⁶ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.111.3c*, (Leo.VII,320); cf. *Sent.II,d.26,q.1,a.5 + a.6 ad 2*, (Mandonnet,680-1,685).

⁵²⁷ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.113.7c*, (Leo.VII,338); *De Veritate* XXVIII.9c, (Leo.XXII, Vol.3,846).

⁵²⁸ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.113.9c*, (Leo.VII,341).

⁵²⁹ Aquinas, *De Veritate* XXVIII.9sc, (Leo.XII, Vol.3,845), Hackett trans., Vol.III,398.

written (John 1:14,16): *We have seen Him...full of grace and truth; and of His fullness we have all received.* And it follows from this that the baptized are enlightened by Christ as to the knowledge of truth, and made fruitful by Him with the fruitfulness of good works by the infusion of grace.⁵³⁰

Incorporation into Christ as a member into the Head marks the beginning of a new creation with a new finality: transformation of the image into the perfect likeness of the Head by *gratia gratum faciens*, grace-making-pleasing, disposing the soul for the *lumen gloriae*.

In contrast to non-rational creatures, the human soul is capable, with the help of divine action and grace (*gratia elevans*), of being raised to a condition and an end beyond the reach of its natural capacity. In this sense, it is *capax Dei*⁵³¹ and *capax vitae aeternae*. This capacity of the human soul to *receive* from God what is above and beyond human nature as such, Thomas also calls an 'obediential potency' (*potentia oboedientialis*); he sets no limits to it:

Now the potency of a creature to receive is of two kinds. One is natural; and this can be entirely fulfilled, because it extends only to natural perfections. The other is obediential potency, inasmuch as it can receive something from God; and such a capacity cannot be filled, because whatever God does with a creature, it still remains in potency to receive from God. Now a measure which increases when goodness increases is determined by the amount of perfection received rather than by that of the capacity to receive.⁵³²

This has particular significance with regard to reception of the virtues:

For this reason we say that in every creature there is an obediential potency, insofar as every creature obeys God in receiving whatever God wills. There is in the soul a potency fashioned to be actuated only by a connatural agent, and in this way it is in potency to acquired virtues. In another way there is a potency in the soul which is fashioned to be actuated only by the divine power, and in this way the infused virtues are potentially in the soul.⁵³³

⁵³⁰ Aquinas, *ST.IIIa.69.5c*, (*Leo.XII*, 110).

⁵³¹ Aquinas, *ST.IIIa.6.2c*, (*Leo.XI*, 96); *Sent.III,d.2,q.2,a.1,q.1*, (*Mandonnet*, III, 71).

⁵³² Aquinas, *De Veritate XXIX.3.ad.3*, (*Leo.XXII*, Vol.3, 856), Hackett trans., Vol.III., 414; Cf. *De Veritate*, VIII.4.ad.13, (*Leo.XXII*, Vol.2, 233-4), Hackett, Vol.I, 337.

⁵³³ Aquinas, *De Virtute I.10.ad.13*, Ralph McInerny trans., *Thomas Aquinas, Disputed Questions on Virtue*, South Bend, Indiana, St. Augustine's Press, 1999, 71.

In a question, arising from the terminology of grace, as to whether there is really a multiplicity of different graces in the soul, Thomas ascribes the terms to different effects of the one grace, and not to different graces:

The division into prevenient and subsequent grace does not divide grace in its essence, but only in its effects, as was already said of operating and co-operating grace. For subsequent grace, inasmuch as it pertains to glory, is not numerically distinct from prevenient grace whereby we are at present justified.⁵³⁴

The different terms describe the different effects of God acting as efficient and final cause:

In so far, then, as grace is a habitual gift within us, it is only one; but in so far as it refers to an effect of God within us destined for our salvation, there can be said to be many graces in us.⁵³⁵

Under the headings of 'prevenient' grace (*gratia praeveniens*) and 'operative' grace (*gratia operans*) are other divine actions expressed variously as grace justifying (*iustificans*), healing (*sanans*), making reparation (*reparans*) and raising up (*elevans*). Sanctifying or habitual grace (*gratia gratum faciens*) comprises 'co-operative' or 'subsequent' grace, which bestows merit and perfects the soul. All of these have their source in Augustinian usage. Thomas quotes Augustine: "He operates that we may will; and when we will, he co-operates that we may perfect".⁵³⁶ The sanctifying gifts, beatitudes and fruits of the Holy Spirit are all included under the one grace. Sanctifying grace is essentially the offer of divine intimacy and a call to share in divine life. However Thomas does not explicitly include 'gratuitous' grace (*gratia gratis data*), which includes the 'charismatic' gifts, under the one grace, perhaps because it is given, only occasionally, for the conversion and benefit of others, and not for the sanctification of the recipient.

⁵³⁴ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.111.3.ad.2*, (*Leo.VII,320*); cf. *Sent.II,d.26,q.1,a.6.ad.2*, (*Mandonnet,II,685*).

⁵³⁵ Aquinas, *De Veritate*, XXVII, 5c, (*Leo, XXII, Vol.3,810*), Hackett, Vol.3, Schmidt, trans., 340.

⁵³⁶ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.111.2c*, (*Leo.VII,318*); Augustine, *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*, XVII, (*PL.44,901*).

Aquinas: Illumination and the *Lumen Gloriae*

(i) Illumination in Augustine

The power of truth to attract and hold the intellect was described by Augustine as a major factor in his own intellectual conversion.⁵³⁷ For Augustine, the objects of true knowledge are unchanging. The rational soul of man only possesses true knowledge and attains true certainty when it contemplates eternal truths in and through itself. But the human mind is changeable and temporal also. How is it to attain knowledge of necessary, immutable and eternal truths? Augustine's solution is his doctrine of divine illumination, which "makes use of a neo-Platonic theme which goes back to Plato's comparison of the Idea of the Good with the sun, irradiating the subordinate intelligible objects or Ideas".⁵³⁸ In this case, the divine light, which illumines the mind, comes from God, who is "the Intelligible Light, in, by and through whom all intelligible things are illumined".⁵³⁹ Augustine draws a parallel with the "bodily light" by which the eyes see:

..the nature of the intellectual mind has been so established by the disposition of its creator that it is subjoined to intelligible things in the order of nature, and so it sees such truths in a kind of non-bodily light that is *sui generis*, just as our eyes of flesh see all these things that lie around us in this bodily light, a light they were created to be receptive of and to match.⁵⁴⁰

So the human soul is created to be receptive of the Intelligible Light in which eternal truth is seen. This light may be mediated to the soul by angels:

God is light, and of himself he illuminates faithful souls, imparting to them understanding of what is divinely revealed or said to them. If he chooses to

⁵³⁷ See the account of his reaction on first reading Cicero's *Hortensius*, in *Confessions*, III.4.

⁵³⁸ Frederick Copleston, SJ, *A History of Philosophy, Vol. 2, Augustine to Scotus*, London, Burns & Oates, 1999, 62. The reference is to the allegory of the cave in *Republic* 514-518.

⁵³⁹ Augustine, *Soliloquium*, I.1.3, (PL.32,870); J.H.Burleigh trans., *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, Library of Christian Classics, Vol.VI, London, SCM Press, 1953, 24.

⁵⁴⁰ Augustine, *De Trinitate*, XII.15.24, (PL.42, 1011); Edmund Hill, OP, trans., N.Y., New City Press, 1991, 336.

use an angel as his minister, the angel can produce an effect in the human mind, enabling it to receive God's light and so to understand.⁵⁴¹

The manner in which this intellectual light is bestowed is explained by Augustine's theory of 'seminal reasons' (*rationes seminales*), drawn from Plotinus, but having an affinity with Aristotle's 'natural potency'. These are the germs or seeds of things which develop in time, enabling form to actualise matter in corporeal things. As applied to the intellectual soul, they are called 'eternal reasons' (*rationes aeternae*), the seeds of intelligible light and eternal truth. They are both implanted by God and informed by God, so that causality is attributed exclusively to God. Augustine is not entirely clear as to whether the *rationes aeternae* are to be regarded as 'innate' in the human soul, though it is certain that their 'in-forming', like the action of grace, takes place (or not) over time, in accordance with the soul's response and receptivity. Just as the will needs the grace of God, the supreme good, to attain virtue, so the understanding needs the light of God, its 'sun', to attain truth. Thomas, quoting Augustine, notes the inseparability of *capacitas* and *imago Dei* in man, being "the image of God by the very fact of having a capacity for Him".⁵⁴²

(ii) Aquinas: The Agent and Passive Intellects

Unlike the Franciscan School in his time, Thomas does not adopt the intellectual 'innatism' of Augustine, based on the 'seminal reasons' (*rationes seminales*), and ultimately on the divine ideas or 'eternal reasons' (*rationes aeternae*). He does allow, however, that knowledge of the existence of God is implanted in us by nature "in a general and confused way...inasmuch as God is

⁵⁴¹ Augustine, *Enarratio in Psalm 118*, (PL.37,1553), Maria Boulding, OSB, trans., N.Y., New City Press, 2003, 427.

⁵⁴² Aquinas, *De Veritate*, XXII.2.obj.5, (Leo. XXII, 616); Hackett, Vol. III, 41; Augustine, *De Trinitate*, XIV.8, (PL.42, 1044).

man's beatitude"⁵⁴³ Also implanted in us by nature is what Thomas calls the "habitual light" of "the agent intellect, through which first principles in speculative and practical matters are made known to us".⁵⁴⁴ He still treats of the illumination of the mind in Aristotelian terms of potentiality and act, but it is the intellect itself, as 'possible' (i.e. the 'possible' or 'passive' as opposed to the 'agent' intellect), which "is in man from the beginning as part of himself",⁵⁴⁵ which has the potentiality for receiving light. In the beginning, however, as "Aristotle...says, it is like *a tablet on which nothing is written*":⁵⁴⁶ The role of 'innate light' is taken by the 'agent intellect' itself:

Accordingly, it is true that our mind receives knowledge from sensible things; nevertheless, the soul itself forms in itself likenesses of things, inasmuch as through the light of the agent intellect the forms abstracted from sensible things are made actually intelligible so that they may be received in the possible intellect. And in this way all knowledge is in a certain sense implanted in us from the beginning (since we have the light of the agent intellect) through the medium of universal conceptions which are immediately known by the light of the agent intellect. These serve as universal principles through which we judge about other things, and in which we foreknow these others. In this respect, that opinion is true which holds that we previously had in our knowledge those things which we learn.⁵⁴⁷

Thomas says in the same article that "This light of the agent intellect comes to the soul from the separated substances [angels⁵⁴⁸] and especially from God as from its first source". This, however, is the 'natural light' of the intellect, to which the supernatural light of grace will be added:

The knowledge which we have by natural reason contains two things: images derived from the sensible objects; and the natural intelligible light, enabling us to abstract from them intelligible conceptions. Now in both of

⁵⁴³ Aquinas, *ST*.Ia.2.1.ad.1,(*Leo*.IV,28).

⁵⁴⁴ Aquinas, *De Veritate* XVI.3c,(*Leo*.XXII,Vol.2,510); cf. below under 'synderesis'.

⁵⁴⁵ Aquinas, *SCG*.II.60.6,(*Leo*.XIII,421).

⁵⁴⁶ Aquinas, *ST*.Ia.84.3sc and c,(*Leo*.V,318); Aristotle, *De Anima* III.4.

⁵⁴⁷ Aquinas, *De Veritate*,X.6c,(*Leo*.XXII,Vol.2,313), Hackett trans.,Vol.2,28.

⁵⁴⁸ Aquinas, *De Veritate*,X.6c,(*Leo*.XXII,Vol.2,313), Hackett,trans.,Vol.2,28; cf. *De Veritate* XVI.1c,(*Leo*.XXII,Vol.2,503-5), Hackett,Vol.II,p.304 on the hierarchy of being in which human nature ranks immediately below the angelic, but is contiguous with it and *insofar as it comes in contact with the angelic nature, must both in speculative and practical matters know truth without investigation*.

these, human knowledge is assisted by the revelation of grace. For the intellect's natural light is strengthened by the infusion of gratuitous light.⁵⁴⁹

The intellective power of the rational creature is called an 'intelligible light', after God, who, as pure act, is pure intelligibility. This can be understood of the natural power of the intellect, or of "some perfection superadded of grace or glory". In order to see God, "there is required some similitude in the visual faculty, namely the light of glory strengthening the intellect to see God".⁵⁵⁰ God being the Intelligible Light, and infinite, the closer things are to Him, the more intelligible they are in themselves, because "a thing is intelligible from the very fact that it is immaterial".⁵⁵¹ Conversely, the nearer and more accessible to our senses, the less intelligible in themselves. It is our senses that give us access to intelligibility, but only with the aid of an intelligible light, the agent intellect, which is part of the soul, and "which is like a habit", according to Aristotle:

Aristotle explains what he means by calling the agent intellect a *habit*, when he goes on to speak of it as a *kind of light*, for "in a certain way light makes potential colours to be colours actually", that is to say, so far as it makes them actually visible. And this function in regard to intelligibles is attributed to the agent intellect.⁵⁵²

As light makes colours visible, so the agent intellect abstracts the intelligible from the phantasm,⁵⁵³ making it 'visible' to the soul, represented by the possible or passive intellect:

Now our passive intellect has the same relation to intelligible objects as primary matter has to natural things; for it is in potentiality as regards intelligible objects, just as primary matter is to natural things.⁵⁵⁴

The passive intellect has the vital role of transforming the intelligible species abstracted into a word, which is the basis for making all-important judgments about external things:

⁵⁴⁹ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.12.13c*, (*Leo.IV*, 137).

⁵⁵⁰ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.12.2c*, (*Leo.IV*, 116-7); *Sent.III*, d.14, a.1, q. 1a 3, (*Mandonnet*, III, 430).

⁵⁵¹ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.79.3c*, (*Leo.V*, 264).

⁵⁵² Aquinas, *SCG.II.78.2*, (*Leo.XIII*, 493), *Anderson*, trans., 249.

⁵⁵³ Aquinas, *SCG.II.78.7*, (*Leo.XIII*, 494), *Anderson*, 250.

⁵⁵⁴ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.14.2.ad.3*, (*Leo.IV*, 169).

the passive intellect thus informed forms a definition, or a division, or a composition, expressed by a word. Wherefore the concept conveyed by a word is its definition; and a proposition conveys the intellect's division or composition. Words do not therefore signify the intelligible species themselves, but that which the intellect forms for itself for the purpose of judging of external things.⁵⁵⁵

The universal gives access to extra-mental reality by way of an act of judgment.

In the light of Thomas's account of the agent intellect, and its relation to universals, the question might be asked whether creaturely being and goodness, which participate in the eternal divine being and goodness in virtue of divine efficient and final (not formal) causality, have any title to extra-mental reality as universals, in view of that participation in the universal divine being and reality. Thomas, who has stressed that God is "not that universal being by which things formally exist" (pantheism),⁵⁵⁶ clearly cannot attribute extra-mental reality to the transcendental attributes of creaturely being. And yet creaturely being and goodness, truth and beauty, are themselves universals which participate, in virtue of creation, in their divine counterparts and have to be revealed to us through an 'intelligible light' (the agent intellect) received directly from angels. Thomas has said that all knowledge is "in a certain sense implanted in us from the beginning...through the medium of universal conceptions which are immediately known by the light of the agent intellect".⁵⁵⁷ All of this, it has to be said, applies prior to any contribution from divine revelation and grace. The latter context is the only one in which Thomas speaks of 'divine illumination', and concerns transmission, by angels to human beings, of universal knowledge beyond the capacity of the unaided intellect to grasp.⁵⁵⁸

⁵⁵⁵ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.85.2.ad.3*, (*Leo.V*, 334-5).

⁵⁵⁶ See chapter 1, p.13 above.

⁵⁵⁷ *De Veritate*, X.6c; Cf. *ST.Ia.106.1c*, (*Leo.V*, 481-2).

⁵⁵⁸ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.111.1c*, (*Leo.V*, 515).

In either case, we are clearly not dealing here with universals as mere conventional signs instituted for semantic convenience.

Thomas's account of the illumination of the intellect is essentially teleological, in that its rationale and goal is always the *lumen gloriae*, which is the ultimate happiness and perfection of the rational soul, since "a thing is perfect so far as it attains to its principle".⁵⁵⁹ Thomas refers to the Beatific Vision as "the vision of God through his essence". However, attainment of vision "is made actual only when the thing seen is in a certain way in the seer,"⁵⁶⁰ just as the thing known is in the knower. But the way in which the thing known is in the knower is dependent on the mode or nature of the knower.⁵⁶¹

By the infusion of habitual grace, and by its obediential potency, the soul is gradually disposed for the 'light of glory':

Everything which is raised up to what exceeds its nature, must be prepared by some disposition above its nature... e.g. air receiving the form of fire... But when any created intellect sees the essence of God, the essence of God itself *becomes the intelligible form of the intellect*. Hence it is necessary that some supernatural disposition should be added to the intellect in order that it may be raised up to such a great and sublime height... to see the essence of God... it is necessary that the power of understanding should be added by divine grace. Now this increase of the intellectual powers is called the illumination of the intellect, as we also call the intelligible object itself by the name of light of illumination... Apocalypse 21:23: *For the glory of God has enlightened it* – viz., the society of the blessed who see God. By this light the blessed are made deiform – that is, like to God, according to the saying: *When He shall appear we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is* (1 John 2:2).⁵⁶²

In the same article, Thomas draws the important parallel between illumination of the intellect with regard to understanding and the infusion of virtue with regard to habit:

⁵⁵⁹ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.12.1c*, (Leo.IV, 115).

⁵⁶⁰ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.12.2c*, (Leo.IV, 116).

⁵⁶¹ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.12.4c*, (Leo.IV, 120); *Sent.II,d.4,a.1*, (Mandonnet, II, 133); *d.23,q.2,a.1*, (II, 572-3).

⁵⁶² Aquinas, *ST.Ia.12.5c*, (Leo.IV, 123); *Sent.III,d.14,a.1,q.1a 3*, (Mandonnet, III, 430).

The created light is necessary to see the essence of God, not in order to make the essence of God intelligible, which is of itself intelligible, but in order to enable the intellect to understand in the same way as a habit makes a power abler to act.⁵⁶³

Likewise, in the following article, it is asked whether some will see the essence of God more perfectly than others. In his answer, Thomas makes clear the inseparable connection between the 'light of glory' in the intellect and charity in the will, which involves desire:

Hence the intellect which has more of the light of glory will see God the more perfectly; and he will have a fuller participation of the light of glory who has more charity; because where there is the greater charity, there is the more desire; and desire in a certain degree makes the one desiring apt and *prepared to receive* the object desired. Hence he who possesses the more charity will see God the more perfectly, and will be the more beatified.⁵⁶⁴

Aquinas: Synderesis and Conscience

Besides the inclination or tendency to the good of its own perfection, the human soul has a corresponding tendency *against evil*. This is the element called 'synderesis', "whose task it is to warn against evil and incline to good",⁵⁶⁵ and which Thomas describes as "a natural habit of first principles of action":

..just as there is a natural habit of the human soul through which it knows principles of the speculative sciences, which we call understanding of principles, so, too, there is in the soul a natural habit of first principles of action, which are the universal principles of the natural law. This habit pertains to synderesis. This habit exists in no other power than reason...[or] understanding...⁵⁶⁶

Synderesis is absolutely reliable and unfailing in its judgments.

The term, 'synderesis' has vanished from modern parlance, along with awareness of the distinct psychological reality it represents in the human soul. It

⁵⁶³ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.12.5.ad.1*, (*Leo.IV*, 123).

⁵⁶⁴ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.12.6c*, (*Leo.IV*, 126), my emphasis.

⁵⁶⁵ Aquinas, *De Veritate* XVI.2c, (*Leo.XXII*, Vol.2, 508), Hackett trans., Vol.2, 10.

⁵⁶⁶ Aquinas, *De Veritate*, XVI.1c, (*Leo.XXII*, Vol.2, 504), Hackett, trans. Vol.2, 304.

has for long been confused or conflated with ‘conscience’, in the sense of “a nagging conscience”. The confusion was evidently not unfamiliar to Thomas:

Now all the habits from which conscience is formed, although many, nevertheless have their efficacy from one first habit, the habit of first principles, which is called synderesis. And for this specific reason, this habit is sometimes called conscience..⁵⁶⁷

Also, ‘synderesis’ is derived from the Greek for ‘conscience’: συνείδησις.

Conscience, however, is an activity to which Thomas assigns an entirely distinct, though complementary, role. Conscience is essentially the act of deliberation or investigation by which we judge particular actions, or inactions, to be, or to have been, right or wrong.

Aquinas: The Virtues

The unity of the virtues, in the Aristotelian perspective, derives from the unity and necessity of prudence, which “counsels, judges and commands in those things that are directed to the end”.⁵⁶⁸ In the view of the Fathers, the virtues derive their unity from the unity of charity, which is, above all, love of God.

Thomas adds this, and ties it in with the Aristotelian perspective, but this time in relation to the ultimate end. In doing so he clearly assigns humanly “acquired” virtue – acquired by habituation – to the rank of “imperfect” virtue, as incapable in itself of ordering man to his true last end.⁵⁶⁹ For Thomas, the moral and intellectual virtues, i.e. the four cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude, can be humanly acquired, but as ordained to the supernatural last end, they can only be infused directly by God together with the theological virtue of charity:

⁵⁶⁷ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.79.13.ad.3*, (*Leo.V,281*).

⁵⁶⁸ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.65.1c*, (*Leo.V,419*).

⁵⁶⁹ Aquinas, *ST.I-II,65,2c*, (*Leo.VI,423*).

Now for prudence to proceed aright, it is much more necessary that man be well disposed towards his ultimate end, which is the effect of charity, than that he be well disposed in respect of other ends, which is the effect of moral virtue: just as in speculative matters right reason has greatest need of the first indemonstrable principle, that *contradictories cannot both be true at the same time*. It is therefore evident that neither can infused prudence be without charity; nor, consequently, the other moral virtues, since they cannot be without prudence.⁵⁷⁰

Faith and hope, according to Thomas, can exist without charity, but only “in an inchoate state” and not as “complete virtues”.⁵⁷¹ The possession of charity, by its very nature, entails faith and hope in God’s promise of eternal life in communion of love and friendship with Him. Therefore, neither can charity exist alone in us, as its orientation to the final end involves also faith and hope:

Charity signifies not only the love of God, but also a certain friendship with Him; which implies, besides love, a certain mutual return of love, together with mutual communion... Now this fellowship of man with God, which consists in a certain familiar colloquy with Him, is begun here in this life, by grace, but will be perfected in the future life, by glory; each of which things we hold by faith and hope... Therefore charity is quite impossible without faith and hope.⁵⁷²

Unlike Scotus and Ockham, Thomas does not speak of ‘acquired’ faith, hope and charity. As theological, therefore supernatural, virtues they are ordained entirely to an end man cannot attain by his own powers. They are infused only. This account, however, rests on an aspect of Thomas’s teleology, natural inclination to a supernatural end, which Ockham will reject, root and branch.

Thomas in *De Caritate* replies to a claim that “the charity in us, by which we love God and our neighbour, is nothing other than the Holy Spirit”. Such an act would not be voluntary on our part:

...even God cannot bring it about that a human movement that (whether interior or exterior itself) derives from an external principle is voluntary. That is why all the acts of the will ultimately derive as from their fundamental root

⁵⁷⁰ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.65.2c*, (Leo.VI,423); Cf. *65.4.obj.1*, (Leo.VI,425); *Q.D.de Virtutibus Cardinalibus*, 2c, McInerny, 118-9.

⁵⁷¹ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.65.4c*, (Leo.VI,425); *Q.D.de Virt. Cardin.2c*, McInerny, 118-9.

⁵⁷² Aquinas, *ST.I-II.65.5c*, (Leo.VI,427).

from the thing that human beings want by nature, which is their ultimate end. As for the things that contribute to the end, we want these for the sake of the end. Consequently, such acts as exceed the entire natural abilities of human nature can only be voluntary if something interior is added to human nature that can complete the will in such a way that an act of this sort may arise from an interior principle.⁵⁷³

Thomas adds that if an act of charity were to derive from an exterior principle, – even the Holy Spirit acting alone – not being voluntary, it would not be meritorious. He concludes:

The only possibility remaining...is that we must possess a *created disposition* of charity which can be the formal principle of an action of love. This does not prevent the Holy Spirit, who is uncreated charity, from dwelling in someone who possesses created charity, moving the soul to a loving action in the way that God moves each thing to those of its actions to which its own form makes it tend. That is how he organises everything in a way that gives delight, since he provides everything with the forms and the powers that make it tend towards the things to which he himself moves it, so that it inclines towards them of its own accord, rather than under compulsion.⁵⁷⁴

The opposite of compulsion here is not the will exercising freedom-of-indifference, but rather the reality which provides the context for sanctifying grace as *gratia cooperans*: a nature, already created with an inclination, a ‘natural desire’ for its own ultimate end in God, liberated by grace to pursue its perfection and fulfilment in that end by cooperation with grace moving it. The ‘delight’ to which Thomas refers arises precisely from this ‘coming-together’ of natural inclination and the movement of grace: grace creating and enhancing freedom, not diminishing or threatening it. The outcome, as Thomas indicates elsewhere,⁵⁷⁵ is a growing and developing graced ‘connaturality’ with the divine, in which the ‘old man’, the ‘old nature’, dies, and the new creation is born.

However, only the concept of freedom as principle of perfectibility can accommodate this account of the working of grace. Ockham’s cannot.

⁵⁷³ Aquinas, *De Caritate*, 1c, E.M. Atkins and Thomas Williams eds. (Margaret Atkins trans.), *Aquinas: Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, CUP, 2005, 110

⁵⁷⁴ Aquinas, *De Caritate* 1c, Atkins trans., 111.

⁵⁷⁵ Aquinas, *ST*.II-II.45.2, (Leo.VIII, 341); For the implications of this for the relationship between intellect and will, see also I-II.14.1. (Leo.VI, 105).

In Thomas's account, the seeds, so to speak, of the virtues are implanted in us by nature in the natural desire for happiness. The virtues are, in fact, an extension of natural desire, in that they prepare the soul for its consummation. The desire expresses itself most efficaciously in charity:

...where there is the greater charity, there is the more desire; and desire in a certain degree makes the one desiring apt and *prepared to receive* the object desired.⁵⁷⁶

Charity, in turn, is "the form of all the virtues":

...in morals, that which gives an act its order to the end, must needs give the act its form. Now it is evident, from what has been said⁵⁷⁷ ...that it is charity which directs the acts of all other virtues to the last end, and which, consequently, also gives the form to all other acts of virtue...for these are called virtues in relation to "informed" acts.⁵⁷⁸

Thomas's account of the virtues is also, therefore, essentially teleological. The charity spoken of here is not the ordinary human love which is not dependent on grace, but the supernatural 'infused' gift which orients a person's whole life towards God, and affects every action and relationship. It is worth quoting at this point an observation of Ralph McInerny, which seems entirely accurate, on the relationship in Thomas between the different types of moral maxim or precept and the 'appetite for the good':

It is the genius of Thomas's moral thought that it combines the exceptionless norms of natural law, the moral maxims which are true only by and large, and the singular judgment made here and now which brings all this universal knowledge into play but which has its certainty and truth from appetite's firm adherence to the good. The truth of practice lies in the judgment's conformity with rectified appetite.⁵⁷⁹

Charity as supernatural virtue cannot exist in a disordered appetite, because it cannot exist in the soul except in company with all the other infused virtues:

⁵⁷⁶ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.12.6c*, (Leo.IV,126).

⁵⁷⁷ Aquinas, *ST.II-II.23.7c*, (Leo.VIII,171): *The ultimate and principal good of man is the enjoyment of God...and to this good man is ordered by charity.*

⁵⁷⁸ Aquinas, *ST.II-II.23.8c*, (Leo.VIII,172); *Sent.II,d.26,a.4 ad.5*, (Mandonnet,II,679).

⁵⁷⁹ *Thomas Aquinas, Disputed Questions on Virtue*, Ralph McInerny trans., South Bend, St. Augustine's Press, 1999, xviii-xix.

Now it is evident that charity, inasmuch as it directs man to his last end, is the principle of all the other good works that are referable to his last end. Wherefore all the moral virtues must needs be infused together with charity, since it is through them that man performs each different kind of good work.⁵⁸⁰

Similarly, with respect to the other theological virtues:

Charity is not any kind of love of God, but that love of God by which He is loved as the object of bliss, to which object we are directed by faith and hope.⁵⁸¹

Conversely, the loss of charity, through mortal sin, entails the loss of all the other infused virtues.⁵⁸² This is so because all of them are ordered to the service and increase of charity, and the essence of charity is participation in divine life. Sin, because of its ego-centric nature, makes such participation impossible, until healing grace restores the soul's theo-centricity.

Aquinas: The Gifts of the Holy Spirit and Graced Connaturality

The gifts of the Holy Spirit play an important role in disposing mind and heart to the action of the Holy Spirit:

..it is manifest that human virtues perfect man according as it is natural for him to be moved by his reason in his interior and exterior actions. Consequently, man needs yet higher perfections, whereby to be disposed to be moved by God. These perfections are called gifts, not only because they are infused by God, but also because by them man is disposed to become amenable to the Divine inspiration.⁵⁸³

In this and the subsequent article, Thomas makes a distinction, not only between different types of virtue, as such, but in the manner in which they are held, corresponding to the two different ways in which man's reason is perfected by God. The first is by its natural perfection, the natural light of reason. The acquired virtues, concerned with man's connatural end alone, are held "in a more perfect manner...because man has (them) in his full

⁵⁸⁰ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.65.3c*, (*Leo.VI,424*).

⁵⁸¹ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.65.5.ad.1*, (*Leo.VI,427*).

⁵⁸² Aquinas, *ST.I-II.65.2c,4c*, (*Leo.VI,423,425-6*).

⁵⁸³ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.68.1c*, (*Leo.VI,447*).

possession”.⁵⁸⁴ Secondly, man’s reason is perfected by a supernatural perfection, the theological virtues:

And, though this latter perfection is greater than the former, yet ...he possesses the latter imperfectly, since we love and know God imperfectly... (Therefore) in matters directed to the supernatural end, to which man’s reason moves him...in a manner, and imperfectly, informed by the theological virtues, the motion of reason does not suffice, unless it receive in addition the prompting or motion of the Holy Spirit (*instinctus et motio Spiritus Sancti*).⁵⁸⁵

Consequently, Thomas considers the gifts to be necessary to man for his salvation.

Aquinas is not at all averse to using the word ‘instinct’ (*instinctus*) to describe not only natural impulses in animals (and man),⁵⁸⁶ but also rational and spiritual impulses of the Holy Spirit in the human soul, termed *instinctus divinus*⁵⁸⁷ or *instinctus Spiritus Sancti*⁵⁸⁸. He also speaks of the ‘instinct of grace’ (*instinctus gratiae*)⁵⁸⁹. Elsewhere, in connection with the gift of wisdom, he speaks of “sympathy or connaturality for Divine things”, which “is the result of charity, which unites us to God”:

Thus, about matters of chastity, a man after inquiring with his reason forms a right judgment, if he has learnt the science of morals, while he who has the habit of chastity judges of such matters by a kind of connaturality. Accordingly, it belongs to the wisdom that is an intellectual virtue to pronounce right judgment about Divine things after reason has made its inquiry, but it belongs to wisdom as a gift of the Holy Spirit to judge aright about them on account of connaturality with them.⁵⁹⁰

The teleological notion of a growing and developing graced connaturality with the divine, made possible by the Incarnation, seems to find a parallel in Bonaventure’s account of the “spiritual senses” in his *Itinerarium Mentis in*

⁵⁸⁴ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.68.2c*, (*Leo.VI,449*).

⁵⁸⁵ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.68.2c*, (*Leo.VI,449*).

⁵⁸⁶ Cf. *ST.I-II.15.2c*, (*Leo.VI,111*).

⁵⁸⁷ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.68.1c,2c*, (*Leo.VI,447,449*); *II-II,171.5c*, (*Leo.X,373*).

⁵⁸⁸ As above; cf. *I-II.68.5.ad.1*, (*Leo.VI,452*).

⁵⁸⁹ E.g., *ST.IIIa.69.5c*, (*Leo.XII,110*).

⁵⁹⁰ Aquinas, *ST.II-II.45.2c*, (*Leo.VIII,341*).

*Deum*⁵⁹¹. Both seem to accord well with the ultimate “deiformity” of the soul enjoying the *lumen gloriae, in patria*⁵⁹². However, both were to suffer increasing neglect and obscurity as a result of the rise and dominance of deontology after 1277.

Aquinas: Merit and the Beatitudes and Fruits of the Holy Spirit

In the treatise on grace in the *Summa*, Thomas twice asks whether man can merit eternal life without grace. In the question on the necessity of grace⁵⁹³, he answers mainly in terms of the disproportion between the powers of the soul and the attainment of eternal life:

Acts conducing to an end must be proportioned to the end...in natural things, nothing can by its operation bring about an effect which exceeds its active force, but only such as is proportionate to its power...Hence man, by his natural endowments, cannot produce meritorious works proportionate to everlasting life...And thus without grace man cannot merit everlasting life.⁵⁹⁴

In the question on merit⁵⁹⁵, he applies this argument concerning man’s “natural endowments” to the “state of perfect nature”, pre-Fall, also. Here, it is the disproportion alone that disqualifies created nature from meriting eternal life without grace, “since it exceeds its knowledge and desire, according to 1 Cor. 2:9: *Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man*”. In the “state of corrupt nature”, post-Fall, “a second reason is added to this, viz., the impediment of sin”:

..no one existing in a state of mortal sin can merit eternal life unless first he be reconciled to God, through his sin being forgiven, which is brought about by grace.⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹¹ See below, p.172.

⁵⁹² Aquinas, *ST.Ia*.12.5c,(*Leo*.IV,123).

⁵⁹³ Aquinas, *ST.I-II*.109,(*Leo*.VII,289-309).

⁵⁹⁴ Aquinas, *ST.I-II*.109.5c,(*Leo*.VII,298).

⁵⁹⁵ Aquinas, *ST.I-II*.114,(*Leo*.VII,344-355).

⁵⁹⁶ Aquinas, *ST.I-II*.114.2c,(*Leo*.VII,346).

Once reconciled to God by the grace of forgiveness and healing, one can begin to merit eternal life from God, not by a relationship of equality, but either *de congruo*: “as it proceeds from free-will”, or *de condigno*: “as it proceeds from the grace of the Holy Spirit”.⁵⁹⁷

If it is considered as regards the substance of the work, and inasmuch as it springs from free-will, there can be no condignity because of the very great inequality. But there is congruity, on account of an equality of proportion: for it would seem congruous that, if a man does what he can, God should reward him according to the excellence of his power. However...inasmuch as it proceeds from the grace of the Holy Spirit moving us to everlasting life, it is meritorious of life everlasting condignly... And the worth of the work depends on the dignity of grace, whereby a man, being made a partaker of the Divine Nature, is adopted as a son of God, to whom the inheritance is due by right of adoption, according to Romans 8:17: If sons, heirs also.

The role of charity is paramount in meritorious acts, regarding both “that good to which man is divinely ordained”, and the use of free-will. Regarding Divine ordination:

...we must first bear in mind that everlasting life consists in the enjoyment of God. Now the human mind’s movement to the fruition of the Divine good is the proper act of charity, whereby all the acts of the other virtues are ordained to this end, since all the other virtues are commanded by charity.⁵⁹⁸

Regarding the use of free-will, “it is manifest that what we do out of love we do most willingly”.⁵⁹⁹ In this way, the action of grace disposes the soul for the reward of an increase of grace.

The beatitudes and fruits of the Holy Spirit mark the soul’s progress towards its goal and reward, the Beatific Vision. Whereas the virtues describe habits, and the gifts the perfecting of the habits, the beatitudes describe the perfect acts resulting from the virtues and gifts, and the fruits of the Holy Spirit are the delightful and delight-giving outcome of the virtues, gifts and beatitudes.

⁵⁹⁷ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.114.3c*,(*Leo.VII,347*).

⁵⁹⁸ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.114.4c*,(*Leo.VII,349*).

⁵⁹⁹ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.114.4c*,(*Leo.VII,349*).

Thomas's description of the beatitudes and fruits conveys very strongly the idea that for those who have faith, and make appropriate use of the virtues and gifts, the fulfilment of hope, and of our nature's natural finality, has its beginnings *in via*. Heaven begins on earth, even if very inchoately:

Accordingly, those things which are set down as merits in the beatitudes are a kind of preparation for, or disposition to happiness, either perfect or inchoate: while those that are assigned as rewards, may be either perfect happiness, so as to refer to the future life, or some beginning of happiness, such as is found in those who have attained perfection, in which case they refer to the present life. Because when a man begins to make progress in the acts of the virtues and gifts, it is to be hoped that he will arrive at perfection, both as a wayfarer, and as a citizen of the heavenly kingdom.⁶⁰⁰

The relationship between the beatitudes and the virtues and gifts is set out systematically, and rather impressively, in *Prima Secundae* 69 of the *Summa*.

The hope of future happiness which they embody springs firstly from the disposition or preparation for it represented by the virtues and merit, and secondly from its inchoate anticipation "in holy men". The virtues move the soul towards beatitude, and the gifts perfect the movement. Thomas enumerates three different kinds of happiness (*beatitudo*) experienced *in via*, and three different relations to the future happiness of final beatitude: [1] *sensual* happiness, which is "false and contrary to reason", therefore an obstacle to it; [2] *active* happiness, which represents hope and is "a disposition of future beatitude," and [3] *contemplative* happiness, which, "if perfect, is the very essence of future beatitude, and if imperfect, is a beginning thereof". Certain beatitudes remove the obstacle of sensual happiness, which may be a matter of [1a] riches and external goods, or [1b] "following the bent of one's passions", whether these be [1ba] irascible, or [1bb] concupiscible. In the case of [1a], the virtue causes moderation in use, and the gift, which perfects the virtue's act,

⁶⁰⁰ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.69.2c*, (*Leo.VI,457*).

causes contempt for the riches and goods: thus *Blessed are the poor in spirit*. In the case of [1ba], the irascible passions are kept within moderate bounds by the virtue of *recta ratio*, and by the perfecting gift they cease to disturb the soul altogether, thus: *Blessed are the meek*. In the case of [1bb], the concupiscible passions are moderated by virtue, and cast aside altogether by the perfecting gift, even to the point of making “a deliberate choice of sorrow”, thus: *Blessed are they that mourn*, chiefly for their sins.⁶⁰¹

The happiness of an *active* life [2] concerns mainly man's relations with his neighbour, either by way of [2a] duty, or [2b] spontaneous gratuity. [2a] is disposed by virtue (justice) not to refuse such a duty, and perfected by a gift to do so “more heartily” (*abundantiori*), and even with ardent desire, thus: *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice*. [2b] involves the virtue of liberality, giving, where reason dictates, to “friends or others united to us”, perfected by a gift, reverence for God (piety), to give to the poor, the maimed etc, who cannot repay, thus: *Blessed are the merciful*.

Contemplative happiness [3] concerns final beatitude or some beginning of it, and therefore has the character of reward, rather than of merit; the two rewards concerned are those of the *active* life of virtue. This has two effects: [3a] the cleansing of man's heart, hence: *Blessed are the clean of heart*, and [3b], in relation to his neighbour, the effect is peace, thus: *Blessed are the peacemakers*. Thomas calls the eighth beatitude a “confirmation and declaration” of all the others, on the grounds that anyone confirmed in the

⁶⁰¹ The rationale behind “a deliberate choice of sorrow” is clarified in I-II.35.3.ad.1,(Leo.VI.242).

others will never renounce them even under persecution, hence: *Blessed are you when men hate you and persecute you.*

The following article in the *Summa*⁶⁰² deals with the rewards of the beatitudes. These are arranged in ascending order, each representing a restitution, in terms of glory, of those goods of which the soul was deprived, or else renounced, or despised, for the sake of the kingdom, when on earth, and beginning with those pertaining to the sensual life:

For the first three beatitudes concerned the withdrawal of man from those things in which sensual happiness consists: which happiness man desires by seeking *the objects of natural desire (id quod naturaliter desideratur)* not where he should seek it, viz. in God, but in temporal and perishable things. Wherefore the rewards of the first three beatitudes correspond to these things which some men seek to find in earthly happiness.⁶⁰³

Consequently, “excellence and abundance of good things in God” – the kingdom of heaven – is promised to the poor in spirit. A “secure and peaceful possession of the land of the living, whereby the solid reality of eternal goods is denoted” is promised to the meek, etc.⁶⁰⁴ The fruits of the Holy Spirit, love, joy, peace etc, represent the delights produced by the beatitudes, both in final glory and in its beginnings *in via*.⁶⁰⁵

Thomas incorporates a reference to “natural desire”, in the foregoing quote, at a point where natural finality, the natural inclination to ultimate beatitude, can be seen to play a foundational role in the whole life of grace represented by the relationship between the virtues, gifts, beatitudes, fruits and rewards. Take away natural desire for a supernatural end involving the soul's inherent

⁶⁰² ST.I-II.69.4.

⁶⁰³ Aquinas, ST.I-II.69.4c,(Leo.VI,460), my emphasis.

⁶⁰⁴ The ascending nature of the rewards is shown in ad 6.

⁶⁰⁵ Aquinas, ST.I-II.70,(Leo.VI,461-4).

orientation to its own perfection and ultimate happiness, and the whole structure starts to become incoherent. This may possibly account, at least in part, for the fact that Ockham, who dismisses natural finality altogether, seems not have treated specifically of the beatitudes and fruits of the Holy Spirit at all. His “metaphysics of separation” would render an account like Thomas’s effectively untenable.

Aquinas: Created and Uncreated Grace

Thomas assigns a certain priority to created grace in the soul as creating the disposition and preparing the way for uncreated grace: the indwelling of the Divine Persons. On the subject of charity, he quotes Augustine⁶⁰⁶:

By charity I mean the movement of the soul towards the enjoyment of God for His own sake. But a movement of the soul is something created in the soul. Therefore charity is something created in the soul.⁶⁰⁷

In *De Veritate*, Thomas speaks of both habitual or sanctifying grace (*gratia gratum faciens*), such as charity, and gratuitous grace (*gratia gratis data*), under the heading of created grace. The latter concerns “the gift of prophecy and of wisdom and the like”, and “it is evident that such gifts are something created in the soul”. Of habitual or sanctifying grace, however,

..some asserted that this kind of grace was nothing created in the soul, but was only in God. But this cannot stand. For God’s accepting or loving someone...is nothing else but His willing him some good.⁶⁰⁸

However, habitual or sanctifying grace is not only created. It also comprises uncreated grace, the indwelling of the Persons of the Trinity. This requires a prior change in the creature. The change that is necessary for the creature to be indwelt is

⁶⁰⁶ Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* III.10,(*PL*.34,72).

⁶⁰⁷ Aquinas, *ST*.II-II.23.2sc,(*Leo*.VIII,164).

⁶⁰⁸ Aquinas, *De Veritate* XXVII.1c,(*Leo*.XXII,Vol.3,790-1), Hackett trans.,Vol.3,309.

..a likening of the soul to the divine person who is sent, by some gift of grace. Because the Holy Spirit is Love, the soul is assimilated to the Holy Spirit by the gift of charity. Whereas the Son is the Word, not any sort of word, but one who breathes forth Love...Thus the Son is sent...according to the intellectual illumination which breaks forth into the affection of love..⁶⁰⁹

The indwelling of a Person (or Persons) of the Trinity in the soul is altogether different from the mode in which God is in all things by His “essence, power and presence” as the first Cause of all things. His special presence in the rational soul is “as the object known is in the knower, and the beloved in the lover”.⁶¹⁰ For Thomas, the rational creature images the Trinity by *acts* of knowledge and love (not just by the faculties of intellect and will as such), just as Word and Spirit proceed by knowledge and love, and as the Trinity dwells in the soul “as the object known in the knower, and the beloved in the lover”. Thomas’s account of the procession and mission of the divine Persons echoes Bonaventure’s account of creation and redemption in terms of “emanation, exemplarism, and return to the Source by way of illumination”⁶¹¹:

Just as in the going forth of all things from their source the divine goodness is said to proceed upon creatures, in that a *received* likeness to it represents that goodness, so too in the bringing back of the rational creature to God the meaning of the processions of the divine persons is present. This is called a sending in that some *received* likeness has its pattern and origin in the relations proper to the person and thus represents them, i.e. as the proper way of the Holy Spirit’s relation to the Father is one of Love and of the Son’s that of Word expressing the Father. Hence just as the Holy Spirit proceeds invisibly into the soul through the gift of love, so does the Son through the gift of wisdom; and thereby there is a manifestation of the Father, who is the ultimate to whom we return. Because, then, in accord with these gifts, a likeness to what is proper to the persons comes to be in us in that we are made like them in a new way. Both processions, then, are called missions... Thus in the receiving of these gifts the divine persons are possessed as leading the recipient back to or conjoining him with the end (term). Thus each procession is called a *giving*, in that it means a new way of having.⁶¹²

⁶⁰⁹ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.43.5 ad.2*, (Leo.IV,450).

⁶¹⁰ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.43.3c*, (Leo.IV,447).

⁶¹¹ See p.40 above

⁶¹² Aquinas, *Sent.I,d.15,q.4,a.1*, (Mandonnet,I,350-1), quoted O’Brien, *Blackfriars Summa*, Vol.7, 260, my emphases.

“The entire Trinity dwells in the mind (*inhabitat mentem*) by sanctifying grace,”⁶¹³ including the Father, who, though not ‘sent’, also gives Himself to us and “abides in us through grace even as do the Son and Holy Spirit”,⁶¹⁴ to whom the indwelling is appropriated through knowledge and love. Love is the medium and rule of all the virtues, without which none of them could be operative in us. Bonaventure and his predecessors had stressed love by itself as the formal reason of the indwelling. Thomas perceived that the missing element was knowledge or wisdom in the sense of *notitia experimentalis*, which “tastes” God by way of perception and, by the operation of the virtues – which involves “using” the gifts of grace – “takes hold” of the indwelling Persons, so as to rest in them and, by possessing them, to “enjoy” them. It is the graced “operation” *by the creature* which completes the picture of the ‘term’ of the divine missions. It comes about by operative and co-operative grace. Thomas writes:

God is in all things through his own action, namely conjoining himself to them as the cause creating and conserving them in being. But he is in the sanctified through their own acts, whereby they reach God and in a certain sense take hold of him, i.e. they love him and know him, and one who loves and knows has what he loves and knows within him.⁶¹⁵

This ‘operation’, or active response to the ‘offer’ of divine self-communication entails a priority of created effects of grace eliciting the response. The sanctifying gifts of the Holy Spirit are also, in this respect, necessary for salvation according to St. Thomas. This is because “the gifts of the Holy Spirit dispose all the powers of the soul to be amenable to the Divine motion”.⁶¹⁶ They supplement, complement and encourage the virtues because,

⁶¹³ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.43.5c*, (*Leo.IV,450*).

⁶¹⁴ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.43.4.ad.2*, (*Leo.IV,449*).

⁶¹⁵ Aquinas, *In II Cor.6, lect.3*, quoted O'Brien, 260.

⁶¹⁶ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.68.8c*, (*Leo.VI,455*).

..we need dispositions, strengthening us readily to obey the Holy Spirit...(who) moves men in such a way that they themselves act freely and so have need of such dispositions.⁶¹⁷

The end and accompaniment of this activity, which comes under the heading of *uti*, the use of the gifts, is *frui*, the possession and enjoyment of the Persons.

“To enjoy is to cleave by love to something for its own sake”, says Augustine.⁶¹⁸

Likewise, Thomas says, “To have the power to rest joyfully in a divine Person is ours by sanctifying grace alone”.⁶¹⁹

BONAVENTURE ON GRACE

Illumination: Christ the Metaphysical Centre

The importance of illumination in Bonaventure’s account of grace – and indeed in his whole theology – can hardly be overstated. It lies at the heart of his concern to preserve the unity of theology with its ‘handmaid’, philosophy.

Without the divine light of revelation, philosophy and the sciences cannot attain to the Source of wisdom and truth: this is especially so without knowledge of the Incarnate Word, the Exemplar of all creation:

Although the metaphysician is able to rise from the consideration of created and particular substance to that of the universal and uncreated and to the very notion of being, so that he reaches the ideas of beginning, centre and final end, yet he does not attain the notions of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. For the metaphysician rises to the notion of this being by seeing it in the light of the original principle of all things, and in this he meets physical science that studies the origin of things. He also rises to the notion of this being in the light of the final end, and in this he meets moral philosophy, or ethics, which leads all things back to the one supreme good as to the final end by considering either practical or speculative happiness. But when he considers this being in the light of that principle which is the exemplar of all things [i.e., Christ], he meets no other science, but is a true metaphysician.⁶²⁰

⁶¹⁷ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.68.3 ad.2*,(*Leo.VI,450*): McDermott trans.,247.

⁶¹⁸ Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* I.4,(*PL.34,20*).

⁶¹⁹ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.43.3c*,(*Leo.IV,447*).

⁶²⁰ Bonaventure, *In Hexaemeron* I.13,(*Quar.V,331*), my parenthesis.

The reference here to “practical or speculative happiness” indicates Bonaventure’s acceptance of the eudaemonistic element in moral philosophy, while emphasising that it finds its resolution and goal only in the light of Christ, the one eternal exemplar cause of salvation:

Such is the metaphysical Centre that leads us back, and this is the sum total of our metaphysics: concerned with emanation, exemplarity, and consummation, that is, illumination through spiritual radiations and return to the Supreme Being. And in this you will be a true metaphysician.⁶²¹

As already noted in chapter 1,⁶²² this cycle of redemption, emanation of the soul from the Father, sanctification in the likeness of the Son, the Exemplar, and return to the Father by the illumination of the Holy Spirit expresses the context for the soul’s finality in Bonaventure’s favoured perspective. It does, however, find a parallel in Thomas, as we have seen.⁶²³ Bonaventure also expresses what amounts to the same thing in terms of ‘ascent’:

..the universe is like a book reflecting, representing and describing its Maker, the Trinity, at three different levels of expression: as a trace, an image, and a likeness. The aspect of trace is found in every creature; the aspect of image, in the intellectual creatures or rational spirits; the aspect of likeness, only in those who are God-conformed. Through these successive levels, comparable to the rungs of a ladder, the human mind is designed to ascend gradually to the supreme Principle who is God.⁶²⁴

The ‘ascent’ in question is the subject of his treatise, *The Mind’s Journey Into God (Itinerarium Mentis In Deum)*. The ascent is by means of the recovery of the “spiritual senses”: in the first place those lost by the Fall, followed by the attainment of more elevated ones made accessible by Christ. The *imago Dei* in the soul also plays a major role in the ascent.

Christ is therefore the centre of everything. As the Word in whom the Father expresses Himself fully,

⁶²¹ Bonaventure, *In Hexaemeron* I.17,(*Quar.V*,332).

⁶²² Chapter 1, p.40.

⁶²³ Above, p.169, *Sent.*I,d.15,q.4,a.1,(Mandonnet,350-1).

⁶²⁴ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium* II.12.1,(*Quar.V*,230); cf.*Sent.*I,d.3,p.1,q.2,(*Quar.*I,72).

This Centre is Truth... nor can any truth be known in any way whatsoever except through this Truth. For the same is the principle both of being and of knowing. If, then, as the Philosopher says⁶²⁵, the knowable is eternal as such, it necessarily follows that nothing can be known except through a truth that is immutable, undisturbed and unconfined.⁶²⁶

As the human intellect is unstable, it cannot find certitude in itself. It needs access to a stable and unchanging truth. However, "it cannot see that truth shining forth unchangeably except by some light shining without change in any way".⁶²⁷ This reflects one of Bonaventure's most often quoted Scriptural texts, from the Letter of James: *All that is good, all that is perfect, is given us from above; it comes down from the Father of all light; with him there is no such thing as alteration, no shadow caused by change* (James 1:17).⁶²⁸ For Bonaventure, intellectual illumination is only one aspect of illumination in general, which includes the gifts of grace with their virtues and fruits. Bonaventure's account of the cosmic hierarchy, based on Pseudo-Dionysius, is rather more closely concerned with illumination-as-grace than Thomas's.

Bonaventure: Natural Law, Synderesis and Conscience

As for Thomas (p.156 above), so for Bonaventure, synderesis is the natural desire *against* evil. In Bonaventure's account, synderesis and conscience, like the natural law, are elements of the innate "natural light" bestowed on the soul by God from its origin, by which the soul knows God as its beatitude and goal. Synderesis, conscience and natural law always incline reason and will towards the good, whereas free choice inclines them sometimes towards evil.⁶²⁹ As with Thomas, synderesis is a natural habit, the ability of the will to desire and to tend toward the good, and, unlike conscience, it cannot be set aside. It is an intrinsic

⁶²⁵ Aristotle, *Ethics* VI.3.

⁶²⁶ Bonaventure, *In Hexaemeron* I.13, (*Quar.* V, 331).

⁶²⁷ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium*, III.3, (*Quar.* V, 304).

⁶²⁸ Cf. *De Reductione* 1, (*Quar.* V, 319).

⁶²⁹ Bonaventure, *Sent.* II, d.39, a.2, q.1, concl., ad.1, (*Quar.* II, 910).

aspect of the soul's finality, or natural desire, as it affects the will, which is the 'rational appetite'. Bonaventure divides the latter into 'natural appetite', which orders the will to its end, beatitude, and 'deliberative appetite', which orders it to the means necessary to attain beatitude. The deliberative appetite, alone, can incline toward contrary things, those conducive to beatitude, or the contrary. Synderesis, being the natural rectitude of the will, cannot err, so cannot be corrupted by sin, which comes only from a deliberative movement of the will.

While synderesis is a natural *habitus* of the will, sometimes called the "spark of conscience",⁶³⁰ conscience is a *habitus* of the intellect, directing it under the guidance of synderesis. The intellect, as for Thomas,⁶³¹ has two essential functions, speculative and practical. In Bonaventure's account, the speculative intellect consists in an *innate* natural light which engenders the habit of the principles of knowledge. The same intellect, as practical, engenders the habit of principles of action. At the same time, the habit of speculative principles engenders the habit of science, while that of the principles of action engenders the habit of conscience. (*conscientia* = the accompaniment of science): conscience, as with Thomas, is concerned with deliberation and judgment.

In both Thomas (p.156 above) and Bonaventure, synderesis, as a *habitus* associated with the natural law, is an aspect of natural inclination towards the goal of beatitude, therefore of natural finality. Likewise conscience, whether defined as an act applying knowledge drawn partly from synderesis (Aquinas), or as a *habitus* of knowledge concerning the natural law, applied under the

⁶³⁰ Bonaventure, *Sent.* II, d. 39, a. 2, q. 1, concl., ad. 1, (*Quar.* II, 909-10); cf. Aquinas, *ST.* Ia. 79.12, (*Leo.* V, 279-80).

⁶³¹ Cf. Aquinas, *ST.* Ia. 79.11, (*Leo.* V, 278-9).

guidance of synderesis (Bonaventure), cannot be separated from natural finality in either account.

Bonaventure: The Operations of Grace

Bonaventure's account of the order and operation of grace is constructed entirely around the two schemes of finality mentioned above: 1) emanation, re-creation in the image and likeness of the divine Exemplar, and return to the Source by illumination,⁶³² and 2) the ascent of the mind to God and recovery of the "spiritual senses".⁶³³ He refers to two 'creations': in the first, man was created in the divine image according to the three powers of memory, intellect and will; in the second, more glorious, re-creation, he begins to be conformed to the Godhead in a far more exalted fashion by the graces purchased by Christ the Redeemer in the form of the three theological virtues of faith, hope and love [*caritas*], and to be made able to share in the life of the Trinity:

Now eternal beatitude consists in possessing God, the supreme Good, a Good immeasurably surpassing anything man's service could merit...(Therefore) the soul...is lifted up through a God-conforming disposition.

If, then, the rational soul is to become worthy of eternal beatitude, it must partake of the God-likening flow. Because this inpouring, rendering the soul deiform, comes from God, conforms to God, and leads to God as an end, it restores our spirit as the image of the most blessed Trinity.⁶³⁴

Grace, in whatever form, is always a free gift, but requiring the active consent and co-operation of the recipient. If it is appropriate to speak of a 'purchase price', it consists mainly in desire of the final end, and active and prayerful seeking, asking, and receiving with gratitude (the appropriate response to *gratia*). As with Thomas (and Augustine), co-operation with the gifts of grace merits further grace. Grace in the 'general' sense is God's guiding and

⁶³² Chapter 1, p.39, *In Hexaemeron*, l.17.

⁶³³ Chapter 1, p.40, *Itinerarium*, 4.4.

⁶³⁴ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium* V.1.3, (*Quar.* V, 252), de Vinck, 182.

preserving presence and concurrence; grace in the ‘special sense’ concerns “that particular assistance which helps the soul prepare itself for receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit”.⁶³⁵ This is *gratia gratis data*, later called ‘actual’ grace, which is given for particular acts, but does not remain in the soul.⁶³⁶ The grace which remains is habitual or sanctifying grace, which Bonaventure calls grace in the ‘proper’ sense:

without which no one may acquire merit, advance in good, or attain eternal salvation. This grace, the root of all meriting, precedes any actual merit... No one has a strict right to such grace, “yet in itself it deserves to be increased by God here on earth, so that, having been increased, it may deserve also to be perfected”⁶³⁷ in the fatherland (*in patria*) and in eternal glory by this same God; for He alone has the power to infuse, augment, and complete our grace in the measure of the co-operation of our will, and in accord with the intent and good measure of His eternal decrees.⁶³⁸

Bonaventure, like Thomas,⁶³⁹ is a compatibilist regarding the relation between free will and the action of divine grace. The “co-operation of our will” is entirely free and compatible with divine concurrence.⁶⁴⁰ Free will, in this context, is an active factor in the growth of grace in the soul:

But once sanctifying grace is received, if good use is made of it, it merits its own increase in the present life. For as regards the influx of grace, God alone is its fontal source; but as regards the increase of grace, God is the source of its growth through infusion, while grace itself is the source of its own growth through merit and worth, and free will is the source of the growth of grace through the co-operating and meriting soul, in that free will, by working with grace, makes what belongs to grace its own.⁶⁴¹

The last statement here is of prime significance for the relationship between free will and grace. The will is not forced by grace, but, in “making what belongs

⁶³⁵ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium* V.2.2, (*Quar.*V,253), de Vinck,185.

⁶³⁶ Bonaventure wrote the *Breviloquium* c.1256-7 (Hayes,16-17). Until Thomas wrote the *Prima Secundae* (1271) of the *Summa*, after which its meaning was generally confined to the ‘charismatic’ gifts of prophecy, miracles, etc., *gratia gratis data* had a very wide and indeterminate meaning. Lonergan calls it ‘ambiguous’: see his *Grace and Freedom*,24.

⁶³⁷ Augustine, *Letter* 186, 3:10.

⁶³⁸ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*,V.2.2, (*Quar.*V,253), de Vinck,185-6.

⁶³⁹ See chapter 2, pp.98-100 above.

⁶⁴⁰ Bonaventure, *Sent.*III,d.31,a.1,q.2.ad.3, (*Quar.*III,677); *Sent.*II,d.26,a.un., q.6.ad.1,4,5, (*Quar.*II,646).

⁶⁴¹ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*,V.2.4, (*Quar.*V,254), de Vinck,187.

to grace its own", it is enlightened, and strengthened towards the true good and final end. It is clear that the *attraction* of grace and the *happiness* of the desired end are both involved.

It is 'gratuitous grace' (*gratia gratis data*) that turns the free will away from evil and prompts it towards good, but not without the consent of free will. In order to receive sanctifying grace, the will must first consent to the expulsion of sin by grace, and to the infusion of grace. Bonaventure at one point speaks of the relationship between gratuitous [actual] grace and sanctifying grace in terms of the "in-forming" of the intellectual seminal principles by the *rationes aeternae*:

..because predisposition toward a perfective form must itself be in the likeness of that form: if free will is to open itself to sanctifying grace, it needs the help of actual grace. And because grace by its very nature does not force free will but solicits it, and also because both grace and will by their very nature pass into act: therefore, in our justification, the acts of free will and grace concur in a harmonious and orderly manner. Actual grace arouses free will, and free will must either give or refuse consent to such arousal. When it consents, it prepares itself for the reception of sanctifying grace, and that is the meaning of "the will doing all that it can".⁶⁴²

The final reference here is clearly to Augustine's dictum that "God does not command the impossible, but bids you to do what you can, and ask for what you cannot".⁶⁴³ It is significant that Bonaventure refers to it here in the context of the will's openness to *receive* grace, both actual and habitual. Elsewhere, he writes, "For when the soul does what it can, grace lifts it up easily and God works in it.."⁶⁴⁴ In order to receive salvation, the will must then co-operate with the sanctifying grace bestowed.⁶⁴⁵

⁶⁴² Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, V.3.5, (*Quar.* V, 255), de Vinck, 191.

⁶⁴³ Augustine, *De Natura et Gratia*, c.43, (*PL.* 44, 271).

⁶⁴⁴ Bonaventure, *In Hexaemeron*, XXII.39, (*Quar.* V, 443), de Vinck, 360.

⁶⁴⁵ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, V.3.1, (*Quar.* V, 254), de Vinck, 189.

The seriousness of sin, and the destruction wrought in the soul by sin, are associated with the defacing of the divine image in the soul. This begins to be restored and healed by the infusion of the habits of the virtues:

..sin...distorts free will, destroys the gift of grace, and imposes the obligation of eternal suffering. Since the defacing of God's image and the destruction of grace are, as it were, an annihilation of moral being and of the life of grace...It is impossible for man to rise from sin unless he is created anew in the life of grace, iniquity is forgiven, and the eternal penalty remitted. He alone...who was the Principle of creation is also the Principle of re-creation: He who is the Word of the eternal Father, Jesus Christ.. What was deformed through the evil of sin, He re-creates by reforming it through the habits of grace and righteousness.⁶⁴⁶

In Bonaventure's division of the graces, as in Thomas's, it is the *one* grace which informs the *three* God-conforming theological virtues, as well as the other infused moral and intellectual virtues and gifts.⁶⁴⁷ Created grace is prior to the reception of uncreated grace, in the sense of providing the context or disposition for it:

For truly, together with grace, and by means of grace, we receive the Holy Spirit, the uncreated Gift, the good and perfect Gift, coming down from the Father of Lights (James 1:17) through the Word made flesh...⁶⁴⁸

Similarly, the *one* (sanctifying) grace branches out into *three* different habits: the habits of the virtues, of the gifts, and of the beatitudes. The virtues are seven in number, three theological and four cardinal; all are freely given and infused.

With the exception of charity, "all virtues dependent upon grace are interrelated⁶⁴⁹ and equal in their meriting power".⁶⁵⁰ The reference to 'dependence upon grace' here implies that not all the moral and intellectual virtues are infused by God: some (as with Thomas⁶⁵¹) are acquired by natural

⁶⁴⁶ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, V.3.2-3, (*Quar.* V, 255), de Vinck, 189-90.

⁶⁴⁷ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, V.4.6, (*Quar.* V, 257), de Vinck, p.196; Cf. Aquinas, *ST.* I-II, 111.3.ad.2, (*Leo.* VII, 320); Scotus, *Ord.* II, d.27, q.un., n.12, (*Vat.* VIII, 288-9).

⁶⁴⁸ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, V.1.2, (*Quar.* V, 252), de Vinck, 181.

⁶⁴⁹ Cf. Aquinas, *ST.* I-II.65, (*Leo.* VI, 418-27).

⁶⁵⁰ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, V.4.6, (*Quar.* V, 257), de Vinck, 195.

⁶⁵¹ Cf. Aquinas, *ST.* I-II.63 and 68.5, (*Leo.* VI, 406-11, 452).

means on the Aristotelian pattern. However, when a mortal sin is committed, all except charity are reduced to a formless existence. Charity is “the form of all the virtues”, so cannot exist without a form, and disappears altogether. All may be re-informed by penance on the return of grace. Grace is the origin, the end, and the form of the virtues.

Bonaventure: The Virtues, Beatitudes, Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit

The result of this is an account of the relationship between the virtues, gifts and beatitudes with some similarity to Thomas’s (pp.164-7 above):

Now, some of the moral acts are original, as believing; others are intermediate, as understanding what is believed; others again are final, as attaining the vision of what is understood. Through the first, the soul is set aright, through the second it is urged on, through the third it is brought to full perfection. Hence sanctifying grace branches out into the habits of the *virtues*, that set the soul aright, those of the *gifts*, that urge it on, and those of the *beatitudes* that lead it to perfection.⁶⁵²

For perfect rectitude, the soul must be set aright in respect of both the final end and the means of attaining it. In view of the end, the Trinitarian image in the soul is set aright by the three theological virtues:

Faith, through belief and assent, leads to the supreme Truth (the Son); hope, through trust and expectation, to the loftiest Height (the Father); charity, through desire and love, to the greatest Good (the Holy Spirit).⁶⁵³

In view of the means to the end, the soul is set aright by the four cardinal virtues:

Prudence rectifies the rational faculties, *fortitude* the irascible appetite, *temperance* the concupiscible appetite, while *justice* directs all of these powers in their relation to a given person... That is why it [justice] is called not only a cardinal virtue, but also a general virtue that comprehends the rectitude of the whole soul; wherefore it may be defined as “rectitude of the will”.⁶⁵⁴ Justice is not limited to those virtues which concern the neighbour alone – for instance, equity and generosity; it applies also to those which

⁶⁵² Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, V.4.3, (*Quar.* V, 256), de Vinck, 194; *Sent.* III, d.34, p.1, a.1, q.1. (*Quar.* III, 736-8).

⁶⁵³ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, V.4.4, (*Quar.* V, 256), de Vinck, 194 (my parentheses).

⁶⁵⁴ Cf. Anselm, *De Veritate*, 12, Davies, 166-171.

concern oneself – for instance, repentance and innocence – and to those which refer to God – for instance, adoration, dutiful love, and obedience.⁶⁵⁵

Hence, the term “justification” is used to signify the making-righteous of the soul, especially in God’s eyes.

While the habits of the virtues are given to set the soul aright and “to correct the deviations of the vices”, the habits of the gifts are given to urge us on, and to “deliver us from the difficulties of the after-effects” of the vices.⁶⁵⁶

Bonaventure goes on to justify the number of the gifts (seven) by describing seven “instances” in which the soul needs help: each instance, as to be expected, involving seven different needs. To give two examples, in the first instance, in “repelling...the deviations of the vices:

Fear (of the Lord) helps against pride, *piety* against envy, *knowledge* against anger which is a kind of insanity, *fortitude* against sloth which destroys the soul’s power for good, *counsel* against covetousness, *understanding* against gluttony, and *wisdom* against lust.

Second, the gifts are properly seven to assist the natural powers. The irascible power needs help toward good in both happiness and misfortune: in happiness it is helped by *fear* (of the Lord), in misfortune by *fortitude*. The concupiscible power needs help in loving the neighbour, and finds it in *piety*; in loving God, and finds it in *wisdom*. The rational power needs help in considering, choosing, and following the truth: *understanding* is a help in considering the truth, *counsel* in its choosing, and *knowledge* in its following.⁶⁵⁷

The other five “instances” of need are, third, “to help the seven virtues”; fourth, to help us “to suffer in the same spirit as Christ”; fifth, “to help us act effectively”; sixth, “to help us contemplate”; seventh, “to facilitate both action and contemplation”. Among the gifts, wisdom takes the place occupied by charity among the virtues: “And, as *charity is the origin and consummation of every*

⁶⁵⁵ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, V.4.5, (*Quar*.V,256), de Vinck, 195.

⁶⁵⁶ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, V.5.2, (*Quar*.V,257), de Vinck, 198.

⁶⁵⁷ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, V.5.3-4, (*Quar*.V,257), de Vinck, 198-9.

*virtue*⁶⁵⁸, so is wisdom of every gift”.⁶⁵⁹ In his (early) Commentary on the Sentences, Bonaventure writes that the word *wisdom*

designates an experiential knowledge of God; and in this sense it is one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. The act of this gift consists in tasting the divine sweetness... The act of the gift of wisdom is partly cognitive and partly affective. It begins in knowledge and is consummated in affection. The taste or savouring is an experiential knowledge of that which is good and sweet..⁶⁶⁰

Bonaventure's whole cosmos, as already noted, is structured on the pattern of emanation, exemplarity, and return by illumination to the Source. The sense of a creation ordered by 'desire' for its final end comes across, if anything, even more strongly than in St. Thomas. To this end, all the divinely-infused habits of the soul are a preparation, at different levels, for the next stage of the soul's 'ascent':

Assuredly, then, the main task of the habits of the virtues is to prepare man for the labours of his active life; that of the habits of the gifts, to prepare him for the repose of contemplation; that of the habits of the beatitudes, to prepare him for the perfection of both.⁶⁶¹

The gifts are 'preliminary dispositions' for reception of the habits of the beatitudes. The beatitudes themselves are concerned with the perfection of the soul, with its virtues and gifts. Here, the gift of wisdom is associated with the beatitude of the making of peace, "because wisdom unites us to the supremely True and Good in whom all our rational desires find their end and their repose".⁶⁶² The beatitudes, in turn, are the fertile ground for the appearance of the twelve 'fruits' of the Holy Spirit (Gal.5:22-24; 1 Cor.13:4-7):

This peace, once attained, is necessarily followed by the overflowing spiritual delight of the twelve fruits that imply the excess of joy... Then is

⁶⁵⁸ Jerome, *Letter* 82.11,(*PL*.22.742).

⁶⁵⁹ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*,V.5.5,(*Quar*.V,257), de Vinck,199.

⁶⁶⁰ Bonaventure, *Sent*.III,d.35,a.un.c,(*Quar*.III,774); cf.Aquinas, *ST*.Ia.43.5.ad.2,(*Leo*.IV,450).

⁶⁶¹ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*,V.6.6,(*Quar*.V,259), de Vinck,205.

⁶⁶² Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*,V.6.5,(*Quar*.V,259), de Vinck,205.

man apt for contemplation and for the vision and embrace of Spouse and bride which come about through the spiritual senses.⁶⁶³

Bonaventure himself, inspired by the experience of his spiritual master, St. Francis, is not at all reticent about the experiential nature of the later stages of the ascent. He himself is clearly 'on fire', so to speak, with desire for the consummation of the soul's union with the Beloved *in patria*, and clearly invites his readers to follow the same path, motivated by the same desire. The necessary desire is kindled by prayer, and by the intellect turning to the light:

For one is not disposed to contemplation which leads to mental elevation unless one be with Daniel a man of desires (Dan.9:23). But desires are kindled in us in two ways: by the cry of prayer, which makes one groan with the murmuring of one's heart, and by a flash of apprehension by which the mind turns most directly and intensely to the rays of light (Ps.36:9).⁶⁶⁴

DUNS SCOTUS ON GRACE

Natural Law and Divine Absolute Power

In contrast to Aquinas's account of natural law,⁶⁶⁵ based on the eternal law and natural finality, and comprising all the precepts of the Decalogue, Scotus's account of natural law concerns itself with his understanding of God's ability to revoke the precepts which he himself has laid down:

In every agent acting intelligently and voluntarily that can act in conformity with an upright or just law but does not have to do so of necessity, one can distinguish between its ordained power (*potentia ordinata*) and its absolute power (*potentia absoluta*)... And therefore it is not only in God, but in every free agent that can either act in accord with the dictates of a just law or go beyond or against the law, that one distinguishes between absolute and ordained power.⁶⁶⁶

However, for the rational creature, subject to that law, the exercise of its *potentia absoluta*, beyond its ordained power, can never be legitimate:

⁶⁶³ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, V.6.5, (*Quar.* V, 259), de Vinck, 205.

⁶⁶⁴ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium*, Prologue, 3, (*Quar.* V, 296), Boas, 4.

⁶⁶⁵ Chapter 2, pp. 89-90.

⁶⁶⁶ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 44, q. un., (*Vat.* VI, 363), trans., Allan B. Wolter, O.F.M., *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality*, Washington D.C., CUA Press, bilingual edition, 1986, 255.

But when that upright law...is not in the power of that agent, then its absolute power cannot exceed its ordained power in regard to any object without it acting disorderly or inordinately.⁶⁶⁷

The exercise of the divine *potentia absoluta* is seen in the Old Testament “exceptions” to the usual order, in which actions clearly contrary to the natural law as normally understood, and as decreed by the Decalogue, are carried out by divine command. The examples most commonly given are, the command to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22)⁶⁶⁸, the command to the Israelites to despoil the Egyptians (Exodus 12:35-6)⁶⁶⁹, and the command to Hosea to “Go...love a woman who loves another man, an adulteress..” (Hosea 3:1).⁶⁷⁰ Scotus sees these as “exceptions” or dispensations from the precepts enshrined in the Decalogue. As such, they provide the rationale for Scotus’s reconfiguring of the whole basis of his ethics, away from the teleological account espoused by Thomas and Bonaventure. For Thomas, the natural law receives its unchanging and unchangeable character from its participation in the eternal law, as manifested in the act of creation. The natural law encompasses the whole of the Decalogue. Its precepts concern that which is fitting to teleologically-oriented rational natures,

Hence, what is commanded there is not good merely because it is commanded, but commanded because it is good in itself. Likewise, what is prohibited there is not evil merely because it is prohibited, but forbidden because it is evil.⁶⁷¹

⁶⁶⁷ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d.44, q.un., (Vat. VI, 363), Wolter, 255.

⁶⁶⁸ Cf. Aquinas, *ST*. I-II. 100.8. ad.3, (Leo. VII, 215): Thomas denies that this was a dispensation to do what the Decalogue forbids, as “God, Who is Lord of life and death...inflicts the punishment of death on all men, both godly and ungodly, on account of the sin of our first parent, and if a man be the executor of that sentence by Divine authority, he will be no murderer any more than God would be”.

⁶⁶⁹ Cf. Aquinas, *ST*. II-II. 66.5. ad.1, (Leo. IX, 90): Thomas denies that this was theft, as “the Lord...ordered this to be done on account of the ill-treatment accorded to them by the Egyptians without any cause: wherefore... *The just took the spoils of the wicked*” (Wisdom 10:19).

⁶⁷⁰ Cf. Aquinas, *ST*. I-II. 100.8. ad.3, (Leo. VII, 215): Again, this is not an infringement of the sixth commandment, because carried out “by command of God, Who is Author of the institution of marriage”.

⁶⁷¹ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, III, d.37, q.un., (Olms-Wadding, VII, pt.2, 878), Wolter, 1986, 272.

If this were true, Scotus replies, there would be no possibility of revocation or dispensation, even by God, from any of the precepts. The Old Testament exceptions show that this is not so for precepts 4 – 10. Therefore those precepts cannot, unlike 1 to 3, be absolutely necessary with regard to bringing man to his final end. Furthermore, they cannot be said to be willed by God on account of their goodness. On the contrary, they can be said to be good because, and only because, God has commanded them. For the same reason, the things they prohibit can be said to be evil in all circumstances, barring divine dispensation.

Departing from Thomas's view, which assigns all the Decalogue precepts, without differentiation, to the natural law,⁶⁷² Scotus makes a distinction between the two 'tables' of the law, as each relates to natural necessity. The first table, precepts 1 to 3, he assigns to natural law "strictly speaking". There can be no exceptions to laws seen to be necessary in themselves, and from which even the divine *potentia absoluta* cannot dispense. These precepts draw their obligatory force from the intra-divine necessity and the "first law" which it entails: "God is to be loved above all, and for Himself". Therefore, natural law in the strictest sense comprises only moral truths known to be true in virtue of their terms (*per se notum ex terminis*) and therefore accessible to natural reason, i.e. those which "regard God immediately as their object".⁶⁷³ This means the first two commandments, as well as (with some reservations⁶⁷⁴) the third.

⁶⁷² Aquinas, *ST.I-II.100.1c*, (Leo.VII,206).

⁶⁷³ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, III,d.37,q.un., (Olms-Wadding, VII,pt.2,898), Wolter, 1986,277.

⁶⁷⁴ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, III,d.37,q.un., (Olms-Wadding, VII,pt.2,898), Wolter, 277-279.

For Aquinas, the whole issue of dispensability hinges on “the intention of the lawgiver”. The second table, as much as the first, embodies that intention,

..which includes “that nothing undue be done to anyone, and that each be given his due; for it is in this sense that we are to take the precepts of the Decalogue. Consequently, the precepts of the Decalogue admit of no dispensation whatever.”⁶⁷⁵

The New Law, one could say, in a real sense, eliminates any supposed distinction between those precepts “having God as their object” and those not. Now, “God is among us”, the commandment to love one’s neighbour – which comes from the first table in any case – can be seen to have God as its object also: “Whatever you did to the least of these...” Far from being dispensable, the moral precepts are made more stringent in the light of the Sermon on the Mount.

With Scotus, the central issue becomes the free exercise of *recta ratio* in applying whatever is apprehended in natural law as a ‘practical’ truth (i.e., ‘to be done’ or ‘not to be done’). Scotus’s over-riding concern with divine freedom as opposed to necessity is focused here on the possibility of revocation of precepts of natural law, or dispensation from their observance. Scotus in fact makes the possibility of dispensation a basis for redefining natural law itself, in its essence and not just in its scope, in a manner designed to eliminate natural necessity or teleology. The possibility of revocation could hardly apply to a law founded on human nature in its essential immutability: that is, the kind of immutability that would place God under necessity in its regard. Therefore Scotus rejects any basis for the second table in human nature. The element of unchangeability is confined to the first table, which is founded on the immutable divine nature (Ockham will sever even this connection to nature and immutability).

⁶⁷⁵ Aquinas, ST.I-II.100.8c, (Leo.VII,215).

Scotus: The Role of *Recta Ratio*

Scotus tells us that “The moral goodness of an act consists in its having all that the agent’s right reason declares must pertain to the act or the agent in acting.”⁶⁷⁶ Scotus’s account of the “naturalness” of the natural law in terms of human nature is centred very much on *recta ratio*, as opposed to natural teleology in the case of Thomas. Likewise, moral goodness in action is discerned by *recta ratio*.⁶⁷⁷ Scotus does, in fact, acknowledge an intrinsic connection between the nature of the agent and the moral law:

[Rational agents]...act by virtue of intellectual knowledge, which alone is able to pass judgment, properly speaking, upon the appropriateness of the action. Such agents are suited by nature to have an intrinsic rule of rectitude for their actions. Only they can have an act whose goodness is moral. But for this it is not enough that the agent have the ability to adjudicate the appropriateness of his acts. He must actually pass judgment upon the act and carry it out in accord with that judgment.⁶⁷⁸

In addition, of the three items of knowledge Scotus considers sufficient for the correct discernment of “all that must pertain to the act” for moral goodness, two concern the nature of the agent:

Every judgment begins with something certain... Hence it presupposes something certain but judged by this intellect, namely: the nature of the agent and the power [faculty] by which he acts together with the essential notion of the act. If these three notions are given, no other knowledge is needed to judge whether or not this particular act is suited to this agent and this faculty. For instance, if one knows what man is, what his intellectual powers are, and what an act of understanding is, then it is clear to him that it befits man to understand with his intellect.⁶⁷⁹

As with moral goodness, so with Scotus’s account of the teleological orientation of the human being. The ruling principle regarding merit and the virtues is *God’s free acceptance* of the acts concerned. However, the teleological orientation is itself a matter of God’s active ordering:

I say that the meritorious act is one acceptable to God in a special way, viz., as worthy of a reward. I say “in a special way” because God accepts

⁶⁷⁶ Scotus, *Quodlibet*, XVIII.3, (Olms-Wadding, XII, 475), Alluntis, 1975, 400, 18.8.

⁶⁷⁷ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, III, d.37 (Olms-Wadding, VII, pt.2, 878), Wolter, 1986, 269-287.

⁶⁷⁸ Scotus, *Quodlibet*, XVIII.4, (Olms-Wadding, XII, 476), Alluntis, 402, 18.11-12.

⁶⁷⁹ Scotus, *Quodlibet*, XVIII.5, (Olms-Wadding, XII, 476), Alluntis, 402-3, 18.13.

all acts with a general acceptance. He loves them according to the measure of their goodness and orders them to himself as their last end. A meritorious act, however, he accepts with reference to some good which ought to be justly awarded it.⁶⁸⁰

As the teleological orientation of the will is not safeguarded by natural points of reference, reason working discursively becomes a partial cause, together with the object, of volition:

Augustine wants will to have a memory; but this can only be if it concurs with will in the act of willing, for otherwise free will would be blind (because willing freely, as such, would be blind); therefore free will includes not only will, but also cognition. And this is clear from the Master (Lombard), who says “free will is the faculty of will and reason” etc. Whence, according to Augustine, ‘the will, when it is upright, knows what it desires’. Therefore ‘nature freely understanding’ is in this way the cause of the act of willing..., thus free will comprises those two powers, namely, intellect and will.⁶⁸¹

Intellect as “reason working discursively”, and free will, together inform the natural appetite, which Scotus identifies as the *affectio iustitiae* – the desire to “render to each what is his due”. In this way, the teleological orientation of the soul is preserved and promoted. Scotus maintains the inseparable connection between right reason and virtuous acts.

Scotus: Original Holiness and Grace

Just as the will, for Scotus, is the seat of the virtues, so it becomes the *locus* of the encounter between nature and grace. Unlike Thomas, Scotus recognizes only the three theological virtues as being divinely infused. He sees no reason to extend this to the moral virtues or prudence.⁶⁸² This is in keeping with a more exalted view of human natural capabilities in general, as compared to most of

⁶⁸⁰ Scotus, *Quodlibet*, XVII.16, (Olms-Wadding, XII, 461), Alluntis, 389, 17.6.

⁶⁸¹ Scotus, *Lectura*, II, d.25, n.78, (Vat. XIX, 255-6), my trans.: *...vult Augustinus quod voluntas habet memoriam; sed hoc non potest esse nisi quia cum voluntate concurrat ad causandum actum volendi, aliter enim liberum arbitrium esset caecum (quia libere volens, in quantum libere volens est, esset caecus); et ideo liberum arbitrium non tantum includit voluntatem, sed etiam cognitionem. Et hoc patet per Magistrum, qui dicit quod “liberum arbitrium est facultas voluntatis et rationis” etc. Unde secundum Augustinum ‘voluntas, quando recta est, novit quid appetit’. ‘Natura igitur intelligens libera’ est huiusmodi causa actus volendi..., ita quod liberum arbitrium complectitur illas duas potentias, scilicet intellectum et voluntatem.*

⁶⁸² Scotus, *Ordinatio*, III, d.34, (Olms-Wadding, VII, pt.2, 722, 729), Wolter, 1986, 355.

his contemporaries. In keeping with the absolute priority of the human will, the encounter with grace takes place through its mediacy, so to speak. The two ‘affections’ of the will are central to Scotus’s account:

..just as the affections are distinct in the will, so also the habits inclining one to these acts will be distinct. That is why I say that charity perfects the will insofar as it is inclined to, or subject to, the affection for justice, whereas hope perfects the will insofar as it is inclined to, or subject to, the affection for what is advantageous. And so charity and hope will be distinct virtues, not only by reason of their acts, which are to love and to desire respectively, but also by reason of what receives these acts, namely, the will insofar as it has an affection both for justice and for what is advantageous.⁶⁸³

His account of grace and the virtues reflects the separation he makes between free will and nature. His exalted view of the will’s propensities in man, even in his fallen state, inevitably entails a correspondingly ‘minimizing’ account of the state of human nature before the Fall. By labelling that minimizing state “supernatural”, he can call our post-Fall state merely natural, in contrast to the Augustinian view, adopted by Henry of Ghent, which sees our present state as “sub-natural”. Scotus’s account of original justice entails that it *could*, though it did not in fact, have existed without sanctifying grace.⁶⁸⁴ Similarly, it did not preclude corruption or mortality, though in fact it may have experienced neither.⁶⁸⁵ According to Cross, “Scotus’s Adam was spiritually undeveloped, unable to produce meritorious actions”.⁶⁸⁶ This seems inconsistent with Adam’s ability to commit such a *demeritorious* action as the original disobedience. However, “Scotus often assumes unfallen humanity [i.e. Adam’s descendants without the Fall] would have been capable of meritorious actions”.⁶⁸⁷

⁶⁸³ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, III, d. 26, (Olms-Wadding, VII, pt. 2, 635), Wolter, 1986, 179, 181.

⁶⁸⁴ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, II, dd. 30-32, qq. 1-4, n. 19, (Vat. VIII, 357).

⁶⁸⁵ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, II, d. 18, q. un., (Olms-Wadding, VI, 784-7).

⁶⁸⁶ Richard Cross, *Duns Scotus*, 1999, 99.

⁶⁸⁷ Cross, 99; Scotus, *Ordinatio*, II, d. 19, q. un., n. 5, (Olms-Wadding, VI, 812); *Ordinatio*, II, d. 29, q. un, n. 7, (Vat. VIII, 317).

Scotus's 'developed' account of original sin in the later *Ordinatio* is forensic in nature, though based on Anselm. Original justice was given to Adam by God together with a command not to lose it. By sinning, Adam failed in his obligation, and earned punishment, which, by God's decision, extended to his descendants. By the divine decision, Adam's sin is sufficient for our not having original justice. Although concupiscence results from the absence of original justice, original sin is, in essence, failure in the obligation to possess that justice.⁶⁸⁸

Scotus: Augustinian Illumination Banished

From the mid 1270s onwards, some scholars, notably Peter John Olivi (c.1248-1298), had voiced difficulties concerning the interaction of divine light and the ordinary human intellect prior to grace: how can it be said to know eternal truth?⁶⁸⁹ In response, Henry of Ghent re-formulated the argument for the account of divine illumination derived from Augustine and championed by Bonaventure. However, he did so by presenting it "in a particularly vulnerable form, since it included the Aristotelian theory of abstraction *as well* [as the Augustinian]".⁶⁹⁰ Concepts abstracted from sense knowledge via phantasms would still remain without form and less than fully certain if not for the fact that "the natural light of reason ascends to the eternal light itself" and forms "an irreducibly simple concept proper to God", but one that is "only analogous to the concept that we abstract from creatures".⁶⁹¹ Scotus was concerned that this concept of analogy, because of its dependence on Augustinian illumination

⁶⁸⁸ Scotus, *Ordinatio* II, dd.30-32, qq.1-4, n.11, (Vat.VIII, 319-358).

⁶⁸⁹ See Timothy Noone, "Divine Illumination" in *Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy*, Vol.1, CUP, 2010, chapter 27, 369-383, 380-1.

⁶⁹⁰ William A. Frank and Alan B. Wolter, *Duns Scotus, Metaphysician*, Purdue University Press, 1995, 138, my emphasis and parenthesis.

⁶⁹¹ Frank and Wolter, 136-7.

theory, “placed an unbridgeable logical chasm between ordinary language and meaningful talk about God”, without some univocal concept to clarify it.

Consequently, “Scotus’s devastating critique of Henry⁶⁹² had the practical effect of eliminating the Augustinian as a distinct alternative to the Aristotelian theory of abstraction from that time onward”.⁶⁹³

Scotus shares Thomas’s Aristotelian view of the human passive intellect as a *tabula rasa* from birth, and of the agent intellect as ‘natural light’,⁶⁹⁴ but goes further than Thomas towards naturalism in deducing unaided ability to form true univocal concepts, including even natural knowledge of God, if only in the form of “general (i.e. universal) notions” (*in generalibus rationibus*).⁶⁹⁵ Thus, Scotus eliminates Augustine’s Neoplatonic concept of illumination by means of his own univocal concept of being. One modern scholar, Robert Pasnau, sees Aquinas as one of the last representatives of the old tradition, and Scotus as the innovator:

Scotus, of course believes that the human mind is created by God, but he differs from Aquinas in putting no weight on any kind of illumination, innate or acquired. It is not that we are illuminated by the divine light, as Aquinas joined the Augustinian tradition in believing, but that the truth we grasp is illuminated. Thanks to God, our world is intelligible. Scotus’s thoroughly naturalistic account of the human intellect represents a turning-point in the history of philosophy. Viewed from this perspective, Aquinas marks the end of the first chapter in the history of the philosophy of mind.⁶⁹⁶

Timothy Noone, on the other hand, regards Aquinas as the real innovator:

..historically speaking there can be no doubt that the non-illuminationist account of mind, first advanced by Aquinas and then developed into a thoroughgoing theory by Scotus, displaced illuminationism. The focus of epistemology shifted from the problem of eternal truth and certainty to the

⁶⁹² Found in Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d.3, p.1, q.4, (Vat. III, 123-171).

⁶⁹³ Frank and Wolter, 138.

⁶⁹⁴ See e.g. Scotus, *Ordinatio*, II, d.27, q.un., (Vat. VIII, 289).

⁶⁹⁵ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d.3, q.2, n.57, (Vat. III, 39), Frank and Wolter, 116-7.

⁶⁹⁶ Pasnau, *Aquinas*, 310.

topic of universal knowledge analyzed through competing versions of intuitive and abstractive cognition.⁶⁹⁷

Neither of the scholars cited, in the works referred to here, makes any mention of the distinction, which is clear enough in Thomas, between (1) illumination understood as some special divine assistance (beyond concurrence) for even the ordinary acts of apprehension and comprehension for which every human being is normally equipped, and (2) illumination by divine revelation and redeeming grace, designed to draw human beings toward God and salvation. This is the subject of the 'six stages of illumination' described by Bonaventure in his 'Ascent' of the mind to God.

Belief in the direct involvement of the angelic hierarchy in illuminating and perfecting human beings also declines rapidly after Scotus. For him, God has sufficiently illuminated created things themselves for us not to need any additional supernatural assistance to grasp their truth, and the truth of the terms we use about them.⁶⁹⁸ However, he is speaking only of naturally-acquired knowledge, including natural knowledge of God,⁶⁹⁹ which pagans also share. Bonaventure had said something similar about creation itself, that it was God's first 'word' to man, that it was created to communicate knowledge of God's existence, glory and power, and his providence and love for his creatures. But Bonaventure had also said that, since the Fall, man had become incapable of reading it correctly without additional supernatural assistance.⁷⁰⁰

⁶⁹⁷ Noone, *Illumination*, 382.

⁶⁹⁸ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 4, nn. 267-9, (*Vat. III*, 163-5).

⁶⁹⁹ Cf. Romans 1:20.

⁷⁰⁰ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, II.12.4, (*Quar. V*, 230), de Vinck, 105; see chapter 1, p. 44 above.

However, according to Noone, “Both modern scholars and their Renaissance predecessors have questioned whether this [dismissal of divine illumination] ought to have occurred”.⁷⁰¹ Their questioning seems to me justified, if one makes a comparison between Bonaventure’s account and Scotus’s.

Bonaventure’s ‘six stages of illumination’ in *The Ascent of the Mind to God* take in, as the first rung of the ladder, both earthly and heavenly creation as vestige and sign of the Trinity, and of God’s plan of salvation. The visible creation was God’s first ‘word’ to man, which, through sin, he became incapable of reading and understanding. In this sense, there is continuity, not a radical discontinuity, between the natural and supernatural worlds. Both are God’s work. Both are signs of God’s intention to save. For Bonaventure and Thomas, illumination, or sight, is a metaphor for the intellect and understanding (We still say “I see” when we understand). The aural sense is, rather a metaphor for the will and assent (as in the Gospel admonition, “He who hears you hears me”: Luke 10:16).

What is happening with Scotus, I suggest, is that a ‘divine illumination’ paradigm of sight and understanding is being replaced, or substituted, by a ‘divine command’ paradigm of hearing and assent. Each of these is perfectly valid as far as it goes, and indeed they are perfectly complementary. Yet there seems no reason to believe that either one is an adequate substitute for the other, any more than the ears are an adequate substitute for the eyes – or the will for the intellect. The danger must be that, from now on, spiritual blindness, the wound inflicted on nature by sin,⁷⁰² will no longer be recognized for what it

⁷⁰¹ Noone, *Illumination*, 382.

⁷⁰² For Thomas, it is, rather, a deprivation of something for which the soul has a natural capacity, see Aquinas *ST.II-II.15.1c*, (Leo.VIII, 118). Bonaventure is quite clear that human

is. Both Thomas and Bonaventure see spiritual blindness as something that can only be cured by the grace of Christ.⁷⁰³

In order to place Scotus's handling of grace in context, it is useful, first of all, to look at Thomas's account of the relationship between grace and finality in respect of Divine providence. His account, characteristically for Thomas, takes its cue from God's provision for non-rational creatures, on the grounds that

..it is not fitting that God should provide less for those He loves, that they may acquire supernatural good, than for creatures, whom He loves, that they may acquire natural good. Now He so provides for natural creatures, that not merely does He move them to their natural acts, but He bestows upon them certain forms and powers, which are the principles of acts, in order that they may of themselves be inclined to these movements, and thus the movements whereby they are moved by God become natural and easy to creatures, according to Wisdom 8:1: "She...orders all things sweetly". Much more therefore does He infuse into such as He moves towards the acquisition of supernatural good, certain forms or supernatural qualities, whereby they may be moved by Him sweetly and promptly to acquire eternal good; and thus the gift of grace is a quality.⁷⁰⁴

This passage from Thomas is cited by de Lubac in one of his seminal works aimed at dispelling certain very long-standing confusions concerning the relationship between nature and grace.⁷⁰⁵ The point at issue is that grace, though supernatural, is neither "super-added" to the soul in the manner of something essentially alien to it; nor is the soul subsumed or absorbed by it, so as to lose its natural identity and integrity; nor yet is grace "naturalizable", thus losing its essentially supernatural, divine character. Thomas describes it as a quality, or "accidental form"⁷⁰⁶ infused into the soul: an accident in that, being

nature is wounded by sin: *Deum enim offendit et naturam laedit; et offendendo Deum hominem gratia exspoliatur, et laedendo naturam vulnerat naturalia* (Sent.IV,Prol.,Quar.IV,1).

⁷⁰³ Aquinas, ST.II-II.118.4.obj.3,(Leo.IX,458-9); Bonaventure, Sent.IV,d.15,p.2,dub.9, (Quar.IV,379).

⁷⁰⁴ Aquinas, ST.I-II.110.2c,(Leo.VII,312).

⁷⁰⁵ Henri de Lubac, S.J., *A Brief Catechesis on Nature and Grace*, San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 1984,41.

⁷⁰⁶ Aquinas, ST.I-II.110.2.ad.2,(Leo.VII,313).

divine, it cannot become the substance of the soul: a form in that, being infused, it belongs inalienably to the soul. De Lubac describes the relationship:

The supernatural, one might say, is that divine element which man's effort cannot reach (no self-divinization!) but which unites itself to man, "elevating" him,⁷⁰⁷ ...penetrating him in order to divinize him, and thus, becoming as it were an attribute of the "new man" described by St. Paul⁷⁰⁸. While it remains forever "un-naturalizable", it profoundly penetrates the depths of man's being... Call it an accident, or call it a *habitus*, or "created grace": these are all different ways of saying (even if one thinks they need various correctives or precisions) that man becomes in truth a sharer in the divine nature (*divinae consortes naturae*: 2 Peter 1:4).⁷⁰⁹

De Lubac goes on to say that St. Thomas speaks of a "connaturality"

established between God and man. He quotes von Balthasar on the meaning of this connaturality: in classical theological language it has two names:

One is an objective name and denotes the reality in itself, and this is grace, which is a sharing in God's own intimate reality; as "sanctifying grace" it gives us objectively a share in God's being; as "actual grace" it enables us to live this reality and act with it. The other name is subjective and shows our consciousness of its presence; it is divine virtue (i.e., an aptitude, a capacity to turn ourselves towards God) and is thus the triad: faith, hope and charity.⁷¹⁰

'Grace' and 'virtue' are here seen as two names for the one divinizing reality of grace, which Thomas calls 'connaturality for Divine things', i.e. a participation in

Divine being and life:

Now this sympathy or connaturality for Divine things is the result of charity, which unites us to God, according to 1 Cor.6:17: "He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit".⁷¹¹

Connaturality is here associated with the indwelling Holy Spirit and the gift of wisdom, which enables us "to judge aright about Divine things on account of connaturality with them".⁷¹²

⁷⁰⁷ Cf. Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* 2.

⁷⁰⁸ Cf. 2 Cor. 5:17.

⁷⁰⁹ De Lubac, *Catechesis*, 41-2.

⁷¹⁰ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *De l'intégration: aspects d'une théologie de l'histoire*, Brussels and Paris, DDB, 1970, 106; de Lubac, *Catechesis*, 42-3.

⁷¹¹ Aquinas, *ST. II-II. 45.2c*, cf. 4c, (*Leo. VIII, 341, 342*).

⁷¹² Aquinas, *ST. II-II. 45.2c*, (*Leo. VIII, 341*).

Scotus: Human Nature, Sin and the Necessity of Grace

Scotus asks “whether human nature alone is sufficient to love God above all?”

His answer is perhaps surprising in the context of a question on the need for the infused virtue of charity:

..natural reason dictates that the infinite good be loved above all.
Consequently, the will can do this by its purely natural endowments, for the intellect could not rightly dictate something to the will that the natural will could not tend towards or carry out naturally.⁷¹³

Scotus gives his conclusion, conceding that “by purely natural means any will could love God above all”, but then adds the qualification, “at least (*saltem*), as human nature existed in the state in which it was instituted”, i.e. in the state of original holiness and justice. This is, in fact, in accordance with Thomas, whose view of the state of man in the earthly paradise is generally more “elevated” than Scotus’s.⁷¹⁴ Thomas concludes:

Hence in the state of perfect nature man referred the love of himself and of all other things to the love of God as to its end; and thus he loved God more than himself and above all things. But in the state of corrupt nature man falls short of this in the appetite of his rational will, which, unless it is cured by God’s grace, follows its private good, on account of the corruption of nature.⁷¹⁵

Regarding the state of nature *in via*, Scotus says that “this precept...can be fulfilled in this life, but not as to all the conditions which are implied by the words, “with your whole heart, your whole soul”, etc., because of impediments to the will caused by the lack of recollection and unity among the faculties. He cites Augustine and Lombard here in support.⁷¹⁶

The respective answers of Thomas and Scotus to the question, “whether man without grace (Scotus: “the free will of man without grace”) can avoid all mortal

⁷¹³ Scotus, *Ordinatio* III, suppl., d.27, q.un., (Olms-Wadding, VII, pt.2, 656); Wolter, 1986, 435.

⁷¹⁴ See p.188 above.

⁷¹⁵ Aquinas, *ST*.I-II.109.3c, cf. 4c, (Leo.VII, 295, 297).

⁷¹⁶ Scotus, *Ordinatio* III, suppl., d.27, q.un., (Olms-Wadding, VII, pt.2, 654-5), Wolter, 1986, 441.

sin”, are characteristic of the preoccupations of each, though they arrive at the same basic answer to the question. Thomas focuses on the need for healing grace (*gratia sanans*), Scotus on the entirely free divine decision to justify the repentant sinner, or not, and subsequently to impart sanctifying grace, or not. However, he does acknowledge that God, by His *potentia ordinata*, has in fact committed Himself to reward the repentant sinner with justification, i.e. habitual or sanctifying grace. Both of them give their answers with reference to the original state of man, Thomas as follows:

Now in the state of perfect nature, man, without habitual grace, could avoid sinning either mortally or venially; since to sin is nothing else than to stray from what is according to our nature, - and in the state of perfect nature man could avoid this [but with the help of divine concurrence]... But in the state of corrupt nature man needs grace to heal his nature in order that he may entirely abstain from sin. And in the present life this healing is wrought in the mind, - the carnal appetite being not yet restored (*reparato*).⁷¹⁷

Scotus’s answer is consistent with his view of sin as essentially a deficiency in the *act*, vis-à-vis *recta ratio*, incurring guilt (*culpa*) and a stain (*macula*) on the soul, but having no particular implications in the form of damage or wounds to person or nature, as “pure nature”. God removes the ‘stain’ on the repentant sinner’s soul by his free will and *potentia ordinata*, and, likewise, imparts justification in the form of *gratia gratum faciens*. Scotus’s concern for divine free will leads him to deny any necessity in the act of justification by separating the remission of guilt from the infusion of grace.⁷¹⁸

Scotus: The Virtue of Charity

In *Ordinatio* III, d.27, Scotus addresses the question “whether there is some theological virtue inclining one to love God above all?” He sets out three ways in

⁷¹⁷ Aquinas, *ST*.I-II.109.8c,(*Leo*.VII,303).

⁷¹⁸ Scotus, *Ordinatio*,II,d.28,q.un.,n.24,(*Vat*.VIII,301); *Ordinatio*,IV,d.16,q.2,n.4,(*Olms-Wadding*,IX,252).

which the objective basis or formal object of such a *habitus* might be understood:⁷¹⁹

1) “as that which is suited by its very nature (*secundum se nata*) to be the essential reason why an act tends towards it and rests with attaining it”.

God alone, as “the objective ground or object of charity”, fulfils this criterion.

God alone, in his unique essence, can be “the formal object or end towards which every theological act or habit inclines”. Scotus offers this proof:

A power [of the soul] that regards something as an adequate motive or terminal object can only be perfectly satisfied in something in which that common feature is most perfectly realized. Now every intellectual or volitional power has as its motive and terminal adequate object the whole of being. In no being, then, whether created or uncreated, can such a power be satisfied save in that in which the aspect of “being” is to be found most perfectly. But only this First Being is this sort of thing.⁷²⁰

Thomas, for his part, specifies the object of the theological virtues, but with reference to happiness:

Man is perfected by virtue for those actions whereby he is directed to happiness...it is necessary for man to receive from God some additional principles, whereby he may be directed to supernatural happiness... Such like principles are called *theological virtues*: first because their object is God, inasmuch as they direct us aright to God.⁷²¹

2) Scotus ascribes his second objective basis for the *habitus* of charity in relational terms, as “some aspect of the object, prior to the act, which makes it appropriate for an act to be directed towards that object”. The aspect in question is God’s “amiability”, attracting and deserving our love because of His actions towards us:

Not only does God’s infinite goodness, or his nature as this unique nature in its uniqueness, draw us to love such, but because this “Goodness” loves me, sharing itself with me, therefore I elicit an act of love towards it. And under this aspect of amiability one can include everything about God that proves his love for us, whether it be creation or redemption or preparing us for beatitude in heaven.⁷²²

⁷¹⁹ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, III, d.27, q.un., (Olms-Wadding, VII, pt.2, 644), Wolter, 1986, 427.

⁷²⁰ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, III, d.27, q.un., (Olms-Wadding, VII, pt.2, 648), Wolter, 1986, 427.

⁷²¹ Aquinas, *ST*. I-II.62.1c, (Leo. VI, 401).

⁷²² Scotus, *Ordinatio*, III, d.27, q.un., (Olms-Wadding, VII, pt.2, 648), Wolter, 1986, 429.

3) The third objective basis is “not properly speaking a formal objective reason, since it is a natural consequence of the elicited act of loving him”.⁷²³

Scotus: Created and Uncreated Grace, *Gratia Co-operans*

Having established that grace is in a faculty or power of the soul, and that an infused theological virtue of charity is necessary *in via*, post-Fall, Scotus asks whether it is necessary to posit ‘created grace’ in the soul as well as the Holy Spirit. Lombard had concluded that the presence of the Holy Spirit alone is needed for the soul to love God as it ought.⁷²⁴ Scotus poses two main contrary arguments to this, the first being as follows:

..the sinner before penitence is unjustified, after penitence is justified,... from this it is argued that unjustness, as it is formally privation, cannot be taken away from any one unless they are given an opposite *habitus*, because ‘to deprive of privation’ is to give a *habitus*...the soul...receives a *habitus* opposite to that privation.⁷²⁵

This *habitus* has to be charity. It cannot be faith or hope as these remain, though ‘unformed’, in the sinner. It is charity that is lost by sin, and which, being ‘the form of the virtues’, ‘informs’ the other virtues on its return.

The second main argument for the existence in the soul of created grace is based on the *ratio* of the meritorious act:

Nothing is said formally to carry out any action unless the principle of the action is the form of the agent: this is found in (Aristotle) *De Anima* II: that because the soul is “that by which we live and feel”, etc., therefore the soul is the act and form of the agent; therefore since meritorious action is of the will, or of the man acting through the will, it follows that that by which he acts meritoriously is his form. But that by which he acts meritoriously cannot be pure nature, because then he could act meritoriously by his natural powers alone, which seems to be the error of Pelagius; therefore

⁷²³ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, III, d.27, q.un., (Olms-Wadding, VII, pt.2, 648), Wolter, 1986, 429.

⁷²⁴ Lombard, *Sent.* I, d.17, c.6, n.159, (I, 116); Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d.17, q.2, (Vat.V, 190).

⁷²⁵ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d.17, q.2, n.114, (Vat.V, 195-6). My trans.: .. *peccator ante paenitentiam est iniustus post paenitentiam est iustus, ... Ex hoc arguitur: iniustitia, cum sit formaliter privatio, non potest auferri ab aliquo nisi detur ei habitus oppositus, quia 'privare privationem' est ponere habitum... anima... recipit habitum oppositum illi privationi.*

something supernatural is required: not faith or hope, which remain in the sinner; - therefore charity.⁷²⁶

An argument in support of Lombard's position points out that a sinner, even after justification, still has to struggle to avoid reverting, and to acquire the habit of loving God *delectabiliter* and *faciliter*. No such difficulty would be experienced if the *habitus* in question was infused rather than acquired.⁷²⁷ Scotus replies that this supernatural grace renders the soul's actions acceptable to God and gives them some extra impetus in the manner of a secondary cause. It does not confer delightfulness and ease, which are fitting only to an acquired *habitus* which comes from repeated acts (*frequenter agere*).⁷²⁸ So the infused *habitus* of created grace justifies and supports, but does not give *delectatio* and *facilitatio*. The same is found in Thomas: "A habit of virtue cannot be caused by one act, but only by many",⁷²⁹ and "Acts produced by an infused habit do not cause a habit, but strengthen the already existing habit".⁷³⁰

To an argument that the will needs no infused *habitus* to love the supernatural good, when it is shown it, as it has no difficulty loving even a lesser good when it is shown it, Scotus replies that that kind of natural response, even to a supernatural good revealed through an act of faith, "would not be meritorious,

⁷²⁶ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 17, q. 2, n. 121, (Vat. V, 198-9), my trans.: *Nihil dicitur formaliter agere aliqua actione nisi principium illius actionis sit forma agentis: hoc accipitur ex II De anima, ubi ex hoc quod anima est "quo vivimus et sentimus" etc., concluditur anima esse actus et forma sic agentis; igitur cum operatio meritoria sit voluntatis, vel hominis per voluntatem operantis, sequitur quod illud quo meritorie agit sit forma eius. Hoc autem quo meritorie agit, non potest esse pura natura, quia tunc ex solis naturalibus posset meritorie agere, quod videtur esse error Pelagii; ergo requiritur aliquid supernaturale: non fides vel spes, patet, quia manent in peccatore;— ergo caritas.*

⁷²⁷ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 17, q. 2, n. 104, (Vat. V, 191).

⁷²⁸ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 17, q. 2, n. 179, (Vat. V, 224).

⁷²⁹ Aquinas, *ST. I-II. 51. 3c*, (Leo. VI, 328).

⁷³⁰ Aquinas, *ST. I-II. 51. 4. ad. 3*, (Leo. VI, 329).

because it would not be in accordance with the inclination of that (infused) *habitus* whose act alone God is disposed to accept”.⁷³¹

Another contrary argument, on the grounds that a *habitus* is an extrinsic cause of acts in a composite being, says that whatever the Holy Spirit can cause in association with a *habitus*, He can cause without such a *habitus*, therefore, as “plurality should not be posited without necessity”,⁷³² there is no need to posit a *habitus* of created grace as well as the Holy Spirit. Scotus replies:

I concede that the Holy Spirit can cause an act immediately in the will, and can accept that act, although caused by Himself, as worthy of eternal life: but then that act would neither be of the will nor in the power of the will; so we do not believe He actually would accept such an act, but rather is disposed to accept an act of the free will, which is in the soul’s power.⁷³³

Another *contra*, - one which effectively denies the possibility of *gratia co-operans* – states that if the Holy Spirit were to co-operate with a *habitus* that was under the will’s control, the Holy Spirit would effectively become the secondary cause, which is not fitting.⁷³⁴ Scotus replies:

I say that that the Holy Spirit co-operates with a will having charity, but not because it has charity, as though its charity was the prior cause, moving the Holy Spirit to co-operate, but because the Holy Spirit generally co-operates with a secondary cause in acts to which that cause is ordained by its form, which in a habituated will is the act of loving. Since you say that the Holy Spirit co-operates before the will has charity, this is false, unless understood as a priority of nature, as a superior cause.⁷³⁵

⁷³¹ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d.17, q.2, n.180, (Vat.V, 224), my trans.: *non esset meritorius, quia non esset secundum inclinationem illius habitus, secundum quem solum Deus disponit acceptare actum.*

⁷³² This *pluralitas sine necessitate non ponenda* was known before Ockham as “Scotus’s rule”, according to Bonnie Kent, Ch.12, “Scotus on the Virtues” in *Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, CUP, 2003, 354.

⁷³³ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d.17, q.2, n.190, (Vat.V, 228-9), my trans.: *...concedo quod Spiritus Sanctus posit actum causare immediate in voluntate, et posset illum actum – tamquam a se causatum – acceptare tamquam dignum vita aeterna: sed tunc nec iste actus esset voluntatis, nec in potestate eius; nec credimus ipsum talem actum acceptare, sed disponit actum liberi arbitrii – qui est in potestate eius – acceptare.*

⁷³⁴ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d.17, q.2, n.110, (Vat.V, 193-4).

⁷³⁵ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d.17, q.2, n.191, (Vat., 229), my trans.: *Dico...quod Spiritus Sanctus cooperatur voluntati habenti caritatem; non quidem quia habet, ita quod caritas eius sit causa*

Scotus: The Gifts, Beatitudes and Fruits of the Holy Spirit

The description of the seven gifts, the eight beatitudes and the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit in *Ordinatio* III, d.34 is devoted largely to grouping all of them under the headings of the four cardinal and three theological virtues. Where Bonaventure looks to see correspondences, Scotus seeks to subsume all under these seven:

Another explanation (Bonaventure's) is that the virtues enable one to act rightly; the gifts to act perfectly; and the beatitudes, to act quickly. On the contrary: by the same virtue I act rightly (because virtue is rectitude in the faculty) and quickly (because virtue is a habit making the operation quick and easy) and perfectly (because virtue is a perfection in the one who has it and is that whereby the action is rendered perfect).⁷³⁶

Further on, he argues that:

We ought to postulate only such habits in a person in the present life as perfect such a one in regard to every object that one can be perfected by at present. Such are the seven virtues in general – I am not concerned here with the acquired theoretical virtues. Apart from such acquired theoretical sciences, then, no habit ought to be assumed in the pilgrim besides these seven.⁷³⁷

The three theological virtues perfect the soul “where God is concerned”, and are able to perfect it “in the highest measure possible”, where the soul is so disposed. The four cardinal virtues perfect the soul “where creatures are concerned”. Similarly, depending on the individual's disposition, they are capable of perfecting “in the highest measure...because they have to do with all that can be sought for others as well as what is needed and is desirable for oneself”. Although he does not say so specifically, it would seem that the influence of the infused theological virtues, just as it perfects their non-infused

prior, movens scilicet Spiritum Sanctum ad cooperandum, – sed quia Spiritus Sanctus cum causa secunda generaliter cooperatur ad actum illum ad quem secundum formam suam ordinatur, quomodo est de diligere in voluntate habituata. Cum ergo dicis quod 'prius cooperatur quam voluntas habet caritatem', falsum est, nisi intelligatur de prioritate naturae, sicut causa superior.

⁷³⁶ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, III, suppl., d.34, q.un., (Olms-Wadding, VII, pt.2, 718), Wolter, 1986, 353

⁷³⁷ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, III, suppl., d.34, q.un., (Olms-Wadding, VII, pt.2, 722), Wolter, 1986, 355.

counterparts, also trickles down to all the other acquired virtues by way of the four cardinal virtues. About the latter, he makes the following comment:

And when I speak of the four cardinal virtues, I do not understand each of these four to be a numerically single habit in anyone, as if there were a universal temperance or a universal justice which extended to everything. Rather there are single species of justice in an individual, each concerned with its own proper subject matter.⁷³⁸

Each of the seven genera of virtues is then divided into species and sub-species embracing every aspect of human perfectibility:

The beatitudes which our Saviour speaks of in Matthew 5 are the same habits which make up the virtues, although at times they name more specific species of the seven virtues previously enumerated⁷³⁹....Among the gifts, the four cardinal virtues and two infused virtues (charity and faith) are expressed⁷⁴⁰...As for the fruits, I say certain of these are virtues falling under our sevenfold classification; others are species of those listed there; and still others are neither the one nor the other, but rather delights that follow as a consequence of virtuous acts.⁷⁴¹

Scotus: Sin

Whereas Thomas⁷⁴² sees the essence of a sinful act in terms of a deficiency, or (free) “falling short” in orderedness to the good, i.e., in the actuality of an act, Scotus sees the same in terms of a deficiency in *liberty*, i.e., as the (free) result of the presence in us *in a limited way* of a pure perfection, the capacity to choose well, that exists in God in an unlimited way. The ability to sin, i.e., the capacity to choose badly, does not pertain to our freedom by reason of its pure perfection (univocal in God and creatures), but by reason of its limitedness in us.⁷⁴³

⁷³⁸ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, III, suppl., d.34, q.un., (Olms-Wadding, VII, pt.2, 722), Wolter, 1986, 355.

⁷³⁹ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, III, suppl., d.34, q.un., (Olms-Wadding, VII, pt.2, 744), Wolter, 1986, 369.

⁷⁴⁰ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, III, suppl., d.34, q.un., (Olms-Wadding, VII, pt.2, 755), Wolter, 1986, 373.

⁷⁴¹ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, III, suppl., d.34, q.un., (Olms-Wadding, VII, pt.2, 769), Wolter, 1986, 375.

⁷⁴² Aquinas, *SCG*. III, 3-6, (Leo. XIV, 9-15).

⁷⁴³ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, II, d.44, (Vat. VIII, 493), Wolter, 1989, 461.

Scotus's account of sin is in many ways a "mirror image" of his account of the virtues. He regards sin as a lack of rectitude in an *act*, not in a person. The lack of rectitude comes from a wrongful use of reason, as opposed to *recta ratio*. Contrary to Thomas and Bonaventure,⁷⁴⁴ a sinful habit or vice does not damage or diminish the nature of a person as such, nor even the rectitude of a person's soul: "Now the badness of an act is a privation in a contingent effect of the will. Therefore, it does not diminish anything pertaining to the will itself".⁷⁴⁵ It attracts punishment by being contrary to the behaviour God has commanded.

The damage that is done by (mortally) sinful acts amounts to the removal of any supernatural habitual grace that may have been in the soul. However,

(not) every sin removes this; the second sin does not, for the first already destroyed it... But the second sin is sometimes more serious than the first and is by nature apt to take away even more. What it does take away essentially [*per se*] is actual goodness [i.e., goodness in the act], and it would also remove the habitual or gratuitous goodness if it were present. What sin in general destroys, then, is something that should have been there.⁷⁴⁶

Just as "actual justice", for instance, is distinguished act by act, so with the privation of good that characterizes evil acts:

For privations are distinguished in terms of the corresponding habits that might have been there...it is the proper nature of the privation which provides the formal grounds for distinguishing privatively, just as it is the proper nature of the corresponding virtue that is the basis for positive distinctions.⁷⁴⁷

Scotus's "formal distinction" comes into play here to distinguish the common nature of badness in individual sinful acts, as with the common nature of each virtue in individual virtuous acts. This makes possible the distinction of degrees of goodness and badness in different acts:

⁷⁴⁴ Aquinas, p.104 above, Bonaventure, p.192-3, n.702.

⁷⁴⁵ Scotus, *Quodlibet*, XVIII.18, (Olms-Wadding, XII, 489), Alluntis, 414, 18.49.

⁷⁴⁶ Scotus, *Quodlibet*, XVIII.18, (Olms-Wadding, XII, 490), Alluntis, 414, 18.50.

⁷⁴⁷ Scotus, *Quodlibet*, XVIII.17, (Olms-Wadding, XII, 489), Alluntis, 413, 18.45-6.

It is also clear why one sin is more grievous than another, whether their differences in gravity be specific or within the same species. For the greater, specifically or intensively, the goodness that should be there, the worse the act that lacks it. If it is a simple lack, the act is privatively worse; if something positively incompatible be present, the act is contrarily worse.⁷⁴⁸

Scotus's contention that sin does not inhere in the nature, or the soul, of the sinner, but only in the sinful acts committed by the sinner, would appear to be a serious departure from the perspective of his predecessors. It seems likely to have contributed to the rise of legalism and the purely forensic approach to sin in succeeding centuries. However, it does enable Scotus to explain why

the damned can continue to sin *ad infinitum* and still their nature is not consumed, nor is any natural aptitude or anything else in their nature. For nothing created can cause an intellectual nature or anything in it to perish, and if it could diminish such a nature, it could eventually destroy it completely.⁷⁴⁹

OCKHAM ON GRACE

The Moral Status of Acts and Habits

Ockham's account of the virtues and their relationship to grace tends to lean heavily on his doctrines of divine freedom and *potentia absoluta*, as well as on what Courtenay calls "his adoption of Scotus's theory of divine acceptation".⁷⁵⁰

All of these, taken together, provide the ultimate guarantee of the moral neutrality of acts-in-themselves. No act or habit is intrinsically virtuous.

But even in human beings, appearances of virtue can be deceptive: "given the same habit and act, in no way varied, they can incline to a meritorious and a

⁷⁴⁸ Scotus, *Quodlibet*, XVIII.18, (Olms-Wadding, XII, 489), Alluntis, 413-4, 18.47.

⁷⁴⁹ Scotus, *Quodlibet*, XVIII.18, (Olms-Wadding, XII, 489), Alluntis, 414, 18.48.

⁷⁵⁰ William J. Courtenay, "The Academic and Intellectual Worlds of Ockham" in *Cambridge Companion to Ockham*, CUP, 1999, 24.

demeritorious act.⁷⁵¹ In this he shares the common perception of the primacy of the interior act:

Therefore no act or habit of the sensitive part is called virtuous or vicious, except by some extrinsic denomination. For if someone prays or sings on his knees, and at first wishes to do it for the honour of God, and then standing for the same act of praying and singing changes his will out of vainglory, or for the sake of a good reputation, numerically the same act of the sensitive part which before was called virtuous is now called vicious, and this is only by some extrinsic denomination.⁷⁵²

The extrinsic denomination is an act of the will. The moral neutrality of acts-in-themselves ensures that most actions are only contingently virtuous, and it is the *interior* act, rather than its corresponding exterior act, that determines the moral status of the act. The interior act alone provides the motive and intention of the exterior act. In these circumstances, while the exterior act remains the same act, the interior act does not. The change of circumstances, i.e. of intention, from good to evil, entails a numerically distinct act. A single act of the will cannot change from good to evil.⁷⁵³

In the same question in *Sent.* III, it is asked whether virtuous habits, including those of the senses, are situated in the intellect. Ockham is concerned to dissociate habits of intellect and will from any natural desire or inclination of intellect to truth, or of will to the good,

I say that it cannot be proved that a habit is to be posited in the intellect because it inclines to truth, but because the intellect, after being shown an object, the object being removed or destroyed, can perform some acts it

⁷⁵¹ Ockham, *Sent.* III, q. 11, (*Theol.* VI, 362).

⁷⁵² Ockham, *Sent.* III, q. 11, (*Theol.* VI, 360-1), my trans.: *Igitur nullus actus nec habitus partis sensitivae dicitur virtuosus nec vitiosus nisi quadam denominatione extrinseca. Si enim aliquis genu flexo oret vel cantet, et primo velit illud propter honorem Dei, et stante eodem actu orandi et cantandi mutet voluntatem quod velit illud facere propter vanam gloriam, vel vult bonus reputari, idem actus numero partis sensitivae qui prius dicebatur virtuosus nunc dicitur vitiosus, et hoc solum est quadam denominatione extrinseca.*

⁷⁵³ Ockham, *Sent.* III, q. 11, (*Theol.* VI, 383).

could not before the object was present, neither is the presence of the object always required when the intellect understands it.⁷⁵⁴

The same applies to the will regarding the good, which is to be attained through the formation of habits by acts. Habits, for their part, are concerned not only with the generation of acts, but also with their increase and perfection:

Therefore I say that a habit is to be posited in the will on account of greater perfection in acts and greater inclination and facility in eliciting an act, all other things being equal. And then it can be argued: any potency, other things being equal in everything else, more inclines after an act than before, and to a more intense act, and acquires a habit from them. But the will is like this, because everything being equal in the sensitive part, it more inclines to an act now than before. This is clear with a continent person who has depraved leanings and does not follow them, whereas before he followed them.⁷⁵⁵

Habits are not innate, although a distinction is drawn “between habits on the one hand and instincts, appetites and inclinations, which may be considered inborn on the other”.⁷⁵⁶

Ockham calls on Aristotle to confirm that the will alone meets the requirements for the presence of virtue in an act:

....only that habit is properly a virtue whose act alone is virtuous; but only an act of the will is virtuous. This is proved: because only an act of the will is praiseworthy or reprehensible; therefore that alone is virtuous. Therefore only a habit generated from such an act is a virtue. This is confirmed by the Philosopher in Ethics III,⁷⁵⁷ where he says that no act is reprehensible

⁷⁵⁴ Ockham, Sent. III, q.11, (Theol.VI,363-4): *Dico quod non potest probari quod habitus sit ponendus in intellectu per hoc quod inclinatur ad verum, sed propter hoc intellectus post ostensionem obiecti, ipso amoto vel destructo, potest in aliquos actus in quos non potuit ante praesentiam, nec semper requiritur praesentia obiecti quando intellectus intelligit.*

⁷⁵⁵ Ockham, Sent.III,q.11,(Theol.VI,365): *Ideo dico quod habitus est ponendus in voluntate propter maiorem perfectionem actus et maiorem inclinationem et facilitatem ad eliciendum actum, ceteris paribus. Et tunc potest sic argui: quaecumque potentia, ceteris paribus in omnibus aliis, magis inclinatur post actum quam ante et ad intensiorem actum, ex illis acquirit habitum. Sed voluntas est huiusmodi, quia omnibus existentibus paribus in parte sensitiva, magis inclinatur ad actum nunc quam prius. Patet de continente qui habet pravias concupiscentias et non sequitur eas, prius tamen sequebatur eas.*

⁷⁵⁶ Oswald Fuchs, O.F.M., *The Psychology of Habit According to William Ockham*, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., Franciscan Institute, 1952, 5.

⁷⁵⁷ Aristotle, *Ethics*.III,c.1,1109b30-31 and c.6,1114a26-27.

unless it is within our power. For no one born blind is culpable because he is blind. But if he is blind because of his own sin, he is culpable.⁷⁵⁸

Just as only acts of the will can be virtuous, so only habits of the will can be virtuous. An act which is virtuous contingently can only be virtuous at all by being in conformity with an act which is necessarily virtuous. But Ockham offers two senses in which no act is necessarily virtuous: the first is that no act necessarily exists, the second that any action of a creature can be brought about by God acting alone without the creature's will being involved.⁷⁵⁹ The conditions for a necessarily virtuous act on the part of a creature are: 1) that it cannot be vicious as long as the relevant divine precept remains in force, and 2) that it cannot be caused by a created will without being virtuous:

Therefore I hold that some primary, necessarily virtuous act must be granted: a primary, praiseworthy act in perfect circumstances, an act so virtuous that it cannot be rendered vicious. Willing to do something because it is divinely commanded is such an act; it is virtuous in such a way that it cannot be rendered vicious, given divine precept. The saints are speaking of the virtue generated by this kind of act when they speak of the virtue that no one can abuse.⁷⁶⁰

And "an act by which God is loved above all things and for his own sake is an act of this sort".⁷⁶¹ Only an act or habit of the will can be intrinsically and perfectly virtuous in this way, since any other act or habit "can be praiseworthy or blameworthy indifferently".⁷⁶²

⁷⁵⁸ Ockham, *Sent.* III, q. 11, (*Theol.* VI, 366): *..habitus ille proprie est solum virtus cuius actus est solum virtuosus; sed solus actus voluntatis est virtuosus. Probatur: quia solus actus voluntatis est laudabilis vel vituperabilis; igitur solus ille est virtuosus. Igitur solus habitus generatus ex tali actu est virtus. Confirmatur per Philosophum, III Ethicorum, ubi dicit quod nullus actus est vituperabilis nisi sit in potestate nostra. Nullus enim culpatur caecum natum quia est caecus. Sed si sit caecus per peccatum proprium, tunc est culpabilis.*

⁷⁵⁹ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, III, 14, (*Theol.* IX, 254-5), Freddoso, 212; cf. *Sent.* III, q. 11, (*Theol.* VI, 389).

⁷⁶⁰ Ockham, *Q. Variae*, 7, a. 1, (*Theol.* VIII, 328), Wood, 71; cf. Augustine, *DLA*, II, c. 19, n. 50, (PL 32, 1268)

⁷⁶¹ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, III, 14, (*Theol.* IX, 255), Freddoso, 213.

⁷⁶² Ockham, *Q. Variae*, 7, a. 1, (*Theol.* VIII, 329), Wood, 73.

Ockham's contemporary, the Franciscan regent master at Paris, Peter Aureol, produced an account of the requirements for divine acceptance⁷⁶³ which tends to imply necessity on God's part. Ockham responded with a counter-thesis, which he divides into three parts: 1) The first concerns logical *insufficiency* for divine acceptance in created forms or dispositions which may or may not be actually inhering in the soul. 2) The second concerns logical *non-necessity* for divine acceptance in such forms or dispositions. 3) The third maintains the particular unsuitability of Aureol's choice of infused habits as fulfilling this role.

1) Insufficiency for divine acceptance

Ockham, characteristically, requires permanent alertness on the reader's part as to whether at any particular moment he is speaking in terms of God's *potentia ordinata* or of his *potentia absoluta*. In the following passage, the references to "God disposing a person for eternal life", and someone having "the requisite form", can both be taken as referring to infusion of supernatural virtue(s):

Because I ask: What is required for someone to be worthy of eternal life? Either it is required and sufficient that God dispose the person for eternal life according to his present state, and in this way such a person would be worthy of eternal life. Or else that God cannot, without injustice, not confer eternal life, and in this way no one, having any form whatever, is worthy of eternal life. Because just as God can, in time, not confer eternal life on someone, however much he may have the requisite form, so by his absolute power He can eternally not confer it.⁷⁶⁴

God is under no necessity to confer eternal life even where He prepares a person for it, and the person places no impediment by reverting to sin:

⁷⁶³ Set out by Ockham in *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.1, (*Theol.* III, 441-445).

⁷⁶⁴ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.1, (*Theol.* III, 446): *Quia quaero: quid requiritur ad hoc quod aliquis sit dignus vita aeterna? Aut requiritur et sufficit quod Deus secundum statum praesentem disponat eum ad vitam aeternam, et isto modo talis esset dignus vita aeterna, Aut sic quod sine iniustitia non potest non conferri vita aeterna, et isto modo nullus habens quamcumque formam est dignus vita aeterna. Quia sicut potest Deus ad tempus non conferre alicui vitam aeternam, quantumcumque habeat talem formam, ita de potentia sua absoluta posset pro semper sibi non conferre.*

Secondly I show that whatever merely supernatural form formally inhering be posited in the soul, it is still in the absolute power of God to accept or not accept that soul. And I speak of that acceptance by which someone is accepted and prepared for eternal life.⁷⁶⁵

This clearly applies even where the soul in question is faithful to the end.

The ‘metaphysic of separation and isolation’ (my phrase) to which Ockham frequently resorts to emphasise and safeguard divine freedom is used here to separate virtue *in via* from the reward it might normally expect *in patria* according to God’s *potentia ordinata*:

..whenever some absolute quality stands temporally in some subject with the lack of some other absolute thing, it can by divine absolute power stand with the lack of that thing in perpetuity; but temporally this form [for instance a supernatural form of infused charity] stands with the lack of the beatific act; therefore by God’s absolute power He can conserve that form perpetually without the beatific act. But whatever God can do He can dispose and ordain. Therefore God can ordain that this person have such a form yet never have eternal life, and consequently such a person would not be dear and accepted by God – with the acceptance of which we are speaking, by which someone is accepted as if he will have eternal life as long as he places no impediment to it.⁷⁶⁶

Likewise, in the same context, Ockham makes use of his “divine annihilation principle” to emphasize the radical contingency and insufficiency of the state of grace of the *viator*:

..whatever form is posited in the soul, God can will to annihilate the soul before giving it eternal life...because whatever God contingently creates, he can contingently annihilate it whenever he pleases; but he created this soul contingently; therefore he can annihilate it.⁷⁶⁷

⁷⁶⁵ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.1, (*Theol.* III, 449): *Secundo ostendo quod quacumque forma mere supernaturali formaliter inhaerente posita in anima, adhuc est in potentia Dei absoluta acceptare illam animam vel non acceptare. Et loquor de acceptance qua aliquis acceptatur et praeparatur ad vitam aeternam: cf. Quodl. VI, q.2, (Theol. IX, 590-591), Freddoso, 495*

⁷⁶⁶ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.1, (*Theol.* III, 453), my parenthesis: *..quandocumque aliqua qualitas absoluta stat per tempus in aliquo subiecto cum carentia alterius rei absolutae, potest per divinam potentiam absolutam stare in perpetuum cum carentia eiusdem; sed per tempus stat ista forma cum carentia actus beatifici; ergo de potentia Dei absoluta posset Deus in perpetuum conservare istam formam sine actu beatifico. Sed quidquid potest Deus facere, potest disponere et ordinare. Igitur potest Deus ordinare quod iste habeat talem formam et tamen quod numquam habeat vitam aeternam, et per consequens talis non esset carus et acceptus Deo – acceptance tali de qua loquimur, qua aliquis acceptatur tamquam habiturus vitam aeternam nisi ipsemet impediat.*

⁷⁶⁷ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.1, (*Theol.* III, 453-4): *..quacumque forma posita in anima, potest Deus velle animam adnihilare antequam det sibi vitam aeternam...quia quidquid Deus contingenter creat, potest contingenter illud adnihilare quandocumque placet sibi; sed istam animam contingenter creavit; ergo ipsam potest adnihilare; cf. Q. Variae I, (Theol. VIII, 19).*

Annihilation might be thought preferable to eternal punishment, but the state of grace of the *viator* is not of itself sufficient to merit exclusion from that either:

For just as if someone always loved God and did all the works accepted by God, God could annihilate him without any injury, so after such works God can give him, not eternal life, but eternal punishment without injury. And the reason is because God is debtor to no one, but whatever He does to us He does purely gratuitously. Therefore from the fact that God does something it is justly done.⁷⁶⁸ For it is clear that Christ never sinned, and yet He was gravely punished unto death.⁷⁶⁹

Conversely, God is not necessitated to confer eternal punishment on anyone with an evil form or privation inhering.⁷⁷⁰

Neither is the fact that an act is performed in accordance with right reason or prudence sufficient of itself to make it virtuous:

Likewise it is no more a virtuous act on account of right reason, than on account of the end or another circumstance, because just as right reason is a partial object of a virtuous or a vicious act, so also with the end and the time whenever. Yet no one posits that the primary goodness of an act is from the end or from the time, but only from an act of the will which is primarily imputable and primarily morally good or evil.⁷⁷¹

In the *Ordinatio*, whose revision (1322-24) dates later than *Sentences* II to IV (1317-18), Ockham stresses his concern for divine gratuity, as well as his anti-Pelagian credentials. It is evident that by this time accusations of Pelagianism⁷⁷² were causing him concern:

..whatever is posited in the soul, God by his absolute power is able not to accept it. In this way, God always beatifies anyone contingently and freely and mercifully and out of his graciousness; so that by purely natural means no one can merit eternal life, nor even by any gifts given by God, unless

⁷⁶⁸ Cf. Aquinas, *ST*.Ia,25,5,ad.2,(*Leo*.IV,297).

⁷⁶⁹ Ockham, *Sent*.IV,q.5,(*Theol*.VII,55): *Sicut enim si aliquis semper diligeret Deum et faceret omnia opera Deo accepta, posset eum Deus adnihilare sine aliqua iniuria, ita sibi post talia opera potest non dare vitam aeternam sed poenam aeternam sine iniuria. Et ratio est quia Deus nullius est debitor, sed quidquid nobis facit, ex mera gratia facit. Et ideo eo ipso quod Deus aliquid facit, iuste factum est. Patet enim quod Christus nunquam peccavit, et tamen fuit punitus gravissime usque ad mortem.*

⁷⁷⁰ Ockham, *Sent*.IV,q.11,(*Theol*.VII,209).

⁷⁷¹ Ockham, *Sent*.III,q.11,(*Theol*.VI,389-90): *Similiter, non plus est actus virtuosus propter rectam rationem quam propter finem vel aliam circumstantiam, quia sicut recta ratio est obiectum parziale actus virtuosus vel vitiosus, ita finis et tempus aliquando. Et tamen nullus ponit quod prima bonitas actus est a fine vel a tempore, sed solum actus voluntatis qui primo est imputabilis est primo bonus vel malus moraliter.*

⁷⁷² See pp.232-238 below.

God contingently and freely and mercifully ordains that someone having such gifts can merit eternal life; so that God cannot be necessitated by anything to confer eternal life on someone. And thus this opinion is maximally far from the error of Pelagius.⁷⁷³

2) Non-necessity for divine acceptance

Similarly, divine freedom and power are not necessitated to require the presence of any form inhering in the soul in order to accept the soul for eternal life. Created charity is a secondary cause, and as such can be bypassed by God acting alone:

I claim...that a human being is able, by the absolute power of God to be saved without created charity... Whatever God is able to do by the mediation of a secondary cause in the genus of efficient or final causality, he is able to do immediately by himself. But created charity, whether it be an effective cause [of eternal life] or a dispositive cause that disposes one toward eternal life, will be an efficient or a final secondary cause. Therefore God is able to give someone eternal life in its absence.⁷⁷⁴

Merit, too, ultimately depends solely on God's free and gracious decision to accept an act as meritorious:

Therefore I say...that it does not involve a contradiction for some act to be meritorious without any such supernatural habit formally informing it. Because no act by purely natural powers, nor from any created cause, can be meritorious, but from the graciousness of God willingly and freely accepting. And therefore just as God freely accepts a good movement of the will as meritorious when it is elicited by someone having charity, so by His absolute power He can accept the same movement of the will even if He does not infuse charity.⁷⁷⁵

⁷⁷³ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.1, (*Theol.* III, 454-5), my trans.: *...quacumque posita in anima, potest Deus de potentia Dei absoluta illam non acceptare; ut sic semper contingenter Deus et libere et misericorditer et ex gratia sua beatificat quemcumque; ut ex puris naturalibus nemo possit mereri vitam aeternam, nec etiam ex quibuscumque donis collatis a Deo, nisi quia Deus contingenter et libere et misericorditer ordinavit quod habens talia dona possit mereri vitam aeternam; ut Deus per nullam rem possit necessitari ad conferendum cuicumque vitam aeternam. Et sic ista opinio maxime recedit ab errore Pelagii.*

⁷⁷⁴ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, VI, q.1, (*Theol.* IX, 587), Freddoso, 492.

⁷⁷⁵ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.2, (*Theol.* III, 471-2): *Ideo dico...quod non includit contradictionem aliquem actum esse meritorium sine omni tali habitu supernaturali formaliter informante. Quia nullus actus ex puris naturalibus, nec ex quacumque causa creata, potest esse meritorius, sed ex gratia Dei voluntarie et libere acceptante. Et ideo sicut Deus libere acceptat bonum motum voluntatis tamquam meritorium quando elicitur ab habente caritatem, ita de potentia sua absoluta posset acceptare eundem motum voluntatis etiam si non infunderet caritatem; cf. Ordinatio, d.17, q.1, (*Theol.* III, 452).*

Conversely, non-necessity applies to the presence of an evil form or privation for reprobation:

But someone can be detested or hated by God without any detestable form formally inhering. Therefore likewise someone can be dear and accepted by God without any form formally inhering.⁷⁷⁶

3) Unsuitability of habits for divine acceptance

Aureol had been putting forward the case for rationality, that is, for accessibility to human reason, of the kind of acts of divine salvific acceptance whose absolute gratuity and non-necessity Ockham has been stressing. Ockham reads necessity into Aureol's portrayal, particularly in the case of the acceptability of divinely-infused habits. He says that "the *ratio* of merit lies principally within the will, insofar as it elicits freely. Therefore a habit is not required for an act to be meritorious".⁷⁷⁷ Not every act, in fact, is produced with the aid of a habit. Ockham's response posits two properties of an infused habit that might be held to *necessitate* divine acceptance: either natural goodness or moral goodness, but rejects both:

This is confirmed, because nothing is acceptable from its nature unless it is in the power of the possessor. Therefore since such a supernatural form is not in the power of the possessor, it will not be acceptable from its nature, – except in the way that every creature is acceptable –, but it will only be acceptable by a specific acceptability out of the divine benevolence and ordinance.⁷⁷⁸

The mere possession of a supernaturally infused habit contributes nothing to the soul's acceptability for eternal life, because it is "not in the power of the possessor", i.e. the will is not involved in its possession. It almost seems that

⁷⁷⁶ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.1, (*Theol.* III, 447): *Sed aliquis potest esse oditus a Deo et detestatus sine omni forma detestabili formaliter inhaerente. Igitur similiter potest aliquis esse carus et acceptus Deo sine omni forma formaliter inhaerente.*

⁷⁷⁷ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.2, (*Theol.* III, 470).

⁷⁷⁸ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.1, (*Theol.* III, 462): *Confirmatur, quia nihil est acceptabile ex natura sua nisi sit in potestate habentis. Igitur cum talis forma supernaturalis non sit in potestate habentis, non erit ex natura sua acceptabilis, – nisi sicut omnis creatura est acceptabilis, – sed tantum acceptabilitate speciali erit acceptabilis ex benevolentia et ordinatione divina.*

Ockham views habits – and especially supernaturally infused habits – as in some way detrimental to the operation of free will, and in that way actually diminishing or compromising the soul's acceptability to God who infuses the habits in the first place. If this is not Ockham's intention, it can still be asked what role, if any, grace actually plays in the making-acceptable of the possessor, apart from being what God has decided, by his entirely inscrutable *potentia absoluta*, to accept.

On the other hand, if it is moral goodness that makes the soul necessarily acceptable to God, then it must be something producible by the agent's free will, since, for Ockham,

..nothing is meritorious unless it is voluntary, and this unless it is freely elicited or carried out, because nothing is meritorious unless it is in us, that is, within our power. But nothing is in our power to act or not to act unless it is from the will as from a moving principle, and not from a habit.⁷⁷⁹

Ockham regards even acquired habits, produced by freely elicited acts on the purely natural level as not being of themselves either praiseworthy or blameworthy. Much less does he regard supernaturally-infused habits, whose acquisition is entirely outside the scope of the agent's free will, as being, of themselves, meritorious of divine acceptance and eternal life:

Besides, the act of loving God above all, with the circumstances he wills to be pleasing to him, even to undergo death and every peril and injury, comes more from the nature of something which does something freely and spontaneously eliciting such an act as acceptable to God, than [from] some form which does not have it in its power but *only receives* it. But, that act remaining in the will, God can [still] not accept that act as worthy of eternal life. Therefore, in the case of some merely supernatural form which is not in the power of the possessor, He can [still] not accept the possessor.⁷⁸⁰

⁷⁷⁹ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.2, (*Theol.* III, 470): *..nihil est meritorium nisi quia voluntarium, et hoc nisi quia libere elicited vel factum, quia nihil est meritorium nisi quod est in nobis, hoc est in nostra potestate. Sed nihil est in nostra potestate ut possimus agere et non agere nisi quia est a voluntate tamquam a principio movente, et non ab habitu.*

⁷⁸⁰ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.1, (*Theol.* III.451), my emphasis: *Praeterea, actus diligendi Deum super omnia, cum circumstantiis quod vellet quidquid placeret, etiam subire mortem et omne periculum et damnum, magis ex natura sua habet quod faciat aliquem libere et sponte*

None of this could be admitted without the concept of the divine *potentia absoluta*, which Ockham uses as the master-key to his whole account of grace and the virtues. I would contend that he uses it rather in the manner of a shibboleth, to disqualify the perspective of theologians, like Thomas, who work within the paradigm of the *potentia ordinata*, and whose interest lies entirely with what God actually does. The concept of the “absolute power” of God is actually found in its basic features in Thomas,⁷⁸¹ though he never emphasised it or used it in the service of a personal agenda, as Ockham does vis-à-vis divine freedom. Scotus made rather more of it, and it is likely that Ockham derived it from him; but it seems unlikely that either Thomas or Scotus would have envisaged, or even countenanced, the sort of use to which Ockham puts it.

Ockham: The Expansion of the Role of Acquired Virtues

In *Q. Variae* 7, Ockham implies that the function of infused theological virtues is merely to ‘concur’ with the action of acquired theological virtues, as the acquired virtues alone incline us to act:

..theological virtues do not necessarily require all other moral virtues. Nonetheless it is by means of moral acts that theological virtues sufficiently cause a morally virtuous act, when accompanied by right reason, if the subject matter of moral virtue occurs. Here both acquired and infused theological virtues concur, because in the absence of acquired virtues, infused virtues do not incline us to perform any act.⁷⁸²

This complete dependence of infused virtues on acquired is explained as follows regarding faith:

..infused faith so inclines to an elicited act of faith concerning specific articles [of faith] that neither a habit nor an act of infused faith can with the

elicientem talem actum esse acceptum Deo, quam quaecumque forma quae non est in potestate habentis sed tantum recipit eam. Sed stante tali actu in voluntate, potest Deus non acceptare illum actum dignum vita aeterna. Igitur posita quacumque forma mere supernaturali quae non est in potestate habentis, potest non acceptare habentem.

⁷⁸¹ Aquinas, *ST*, Ia, 25, 5, (*Leo*.IV, 296-7); cf. Ia, 19, 3, (*Leo*.IV, 235); *De Potentia* I, 5, ad. 5; *De Veritate* XXIII, 8, ad. 2, (*Leo*.XXII, Vol. 3, 675).

⁷⁸² Ockham, *Q. Variae*, 7, a. 3, (*Theol*.VIII, 357), Wood, 115.

intellect be a sufficient principle eliciting an act of believing concerning any specific article.⁷⁸³

He gives the example of a boy who has received infused faith at baptism, but is brought up in isolation and never instructed in the articles of faith. He has the use of reason, but “cannot elicit any act of believing concerning any article”.

Faith first has to be acquired by hearing or by reading. In the same question, his positing of acquired faith, hope and charity is justified in terms of experience, and applied particularly to charity:

..just as nothing should be posited except when supported by experience or demonstration or authority, so nothing should be denied being posited when supported by certain experience. But the positing of acquired faith, hope and charity is supported by certain experience... It is likewise with acquired charity, because one instructed infidel among pagans can through teaching love God above all purely naturally. He can also praise God, sing and pray. Therefore he has non-infused, therefore it is acquired.⁷⁸⁴

Aquinas, in *De Caritate*, deals with the necessity of interior motivation for acts to be meritorious, and concludes that

..such acts as exceed the entire natural abilities of human nature can only be voluntary if something interior is added to human nature that can complete the will in such a way that an act of this sort may arise from an interior principle.⁷⁸⁵

The only possibility is that “we must possess a *created disposition* of charity”, i.e. an infused *habitus*, “which can be the formal principle of an action of love”.⁷⁸⁶ Ockham’s response, in *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.2, to what Aquinas says here in *De Caritate* begins by denying the necessity of any such connection between nature and grace for merit and divine acceptance. At the same time, it has to be

⁷⁸³ Ockham, *Sent.* III, q.9, (*Theol.* VI, 290), my trans.: *...fides infusa sic inclinatur ad actum fidei elicited circa articulos in speciali quod nec habitus fidei infusae nec actus potest cum intellectu esse principium sufficiens ad eliciendum actum credendi circa articulum aliquem in speciali.*

⁷⁸⁴ Ockham, *Sent.* III, q.9, (*Theol.* VI, 281); cf. Scotus, *Ordinatio*, III, d.23, q.un., n.4, (Olms-Wadding, VII, 460).

⁷⁸⁵ Aquinas, *De Caritate*, I.1c, Atkins trans., 110.

⁷⁸⁶ Aquinas, *De Caritate*, I.1c, Atkins, 111.

appreciated that it is precisely the *necessity*, and that on God's part, not the connection itself, that Ockham is objecting to:

..because a good movement of the will elicited by purely natural means God can accept from his graciousness, and consequently such an act will be meritorious from the gracious acceptance of God. Therefore insofar as such an act is meritorious the habit in question is not required necessarily.⁷⁸⁷

The critical edition⁷⁸⁸ notes that Ockham's text from here, and for the ensuing four pages, was cited by the *magistri* in the proceedings instituted against him at the papal court at Avignon by the Chancellor of Oxford University, John Lutterell, in 1324. The *magistri* "deemed William's doctrine suspect of the Pelagian heresy". As Ockham's denial of any Pelagian doctrine on his part is already contained in the previous question (d.17,q.1), they cannot have been the first to construe (or misconstrue) his teaching on merit as Pelagian. I return to the subject below.

Ockham's purpose here, *contra* Thomas, is evidently to minimize the difference between acts of charity produced purely naturally, by 'acquired charity', and those produced with the help of the infused virtue of charity. He does not consider acts of charity to "exceed the whole faculty of human nature", the position he (correctly) attributes to Thomas:

In reply to the first *ratio* of the other opinion [Thomas's] I say: that neither a meritorious act, nor even an act of charity, exceeds the whole faculty of human nature. Because every act of charity we perform in the common course of things in this life, is of the same *ratio* as an act possible to our purely natural powers, and thus that act does not exceed the faculty of our human nature.⁷⁸⁹

⁷⁸⁷ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.2, (*Theol.* III, 469), my trans.: ..*quia bonum motum voluntatis ex puris naturalibus elicited potest Deus acceptare de gratia sua, et per consequens talis actus ex gratuita Dei acceptatione erit meritorius. Igitur ad hoc quod talis actus sit meritorius non requiritur talis habitus necessario.*

⁷⁸⁸ *Guillelmi de Ockham, Opera Theologica*, Vol. III, NY, St Bonaventure University, 1977, 469.

⁷⁸⁹ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.2, (*Theol.* III, 472), my trans.: *Ad primam rationem alterius opinionis dico: primo, quod nec actus meritorius, nec etiam actus caritatis, excedit totam facultatem naturae humanae. Quia omnis actus caritatis quem secundum communem cursum habemus in*

Human nature of itself needs no assistance to perform demeritorious acts, therefore neither does it, of necessity, need assistance to perform meritorious acts:

Besides, everything that can of itself (be) in a demeritorious act, can by the absolute power of God (be) in a meritorious act. Because, since demeritorious and meritorious acts are contraries, a meritorious act is no more repugnant to nature constituted of purely natural powers than is a demeritorious act to nature constituted of purely natural powers. But the will can of itself be in a demeritorious act, therefore it does not involve a contradiction for the will to be placed in a meritorious act by purely natural powers. However, that act will not be meritorious by purely natural powers, but solely from the graciousness of God; not formally informing the will, but gratuitously accepting that act elicited purely by natural means.⁷⁹⁰

It needs to be kept in mind, in clarifying Ockham's meaning here, that this is primarily a statement about divine freedom from necessity. The phrase, 'by the absolute power of God', does not apply to any action of God in the soul, but purely to a divine decision to 'accept' an act as meritorious, undetermined by anything in, or not in, the soul itself. In view of the tacit and extremely infrequent nature of Ockham's admissions that God never in fact resorts to his *potentia absoluta* in his dealings with creatures,⁷⁹¹ it is hardly surprising that he leaves himself open to misunderstanding, especially when he devotes so much space to describing situations that could exist only if God did so act.

via, est eiusdem rationis cum actu ex puris naturalibus possibili, et ita ille actus non excedit facultatem naturae humanae.

⁷⁹⁰ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.2, (*Theol.* III, 469-70): *Praeterea, omne illud quod potest ex se sufficienter in actum demeritorium, potest de potentia Dei absoluta in actum meritorium ex se. Quia cum actus demeritorius et meritorius sint contrarii, non est maior repugnantia actus meritorii ad naturam in solis naturalibus constitutam quam sit actus demeritorii ad naturam in solis naturalibus constitutam. Sed voluntas potest ex se in actum demeritorium, ergo non includit contradictionem voluntatem ex puris naturalibus ferri in actum meritorium. Non tamen erit ille actus meritorius ex puris naturalibus, sed ex sola gratia Dei; non formaliter voluntatem informante, sed illum actum ex puris naturalibus elicited gratuite acceptante.*

⁷⁹¹ In *Sent.* II, q.4, (*Theol.* V, 51), he says, "God can do many things that he does not do" (*Deus potest multa facere quae non facit*); cf. *Ordinatio*, d.43, q.1, (*Theol.* IV, 636). In *Quodlibet*, VI, q.1, (*Theol.* IX, 586), he says, "God can do many things that he does not wish to do" (*multa potest Deus facere quae non vult facere*): and in the latter he is quoting Lombard, *Sent.* I, d.43. I have not been able to find, from the indexes of Ockham's *Opera Theologica*, any other statements of a similar, or more explicit, nature on the non-use in practice of divine *potentia absoluta*.

Secondarily, this statement is about human freedom-of-indifference, the criterion of bare and undetermined choice between contraries that Ockham insists on as the absolute pre-requisite for the correct moral evaluation of acts. The meritorious or non-meritorious status of acts can only be threatened or compromised by anything in human nature which might 'favour' one or the other in its naturally-determined acts.

It is clear from Ockham's next paragraph that habits, too, present him with a problem here, notwithstanding their long-established association with virtue:

Besides, nothing is meritorious unless it is voluntary, and this unless it is freely elicited or carried out, because nothing is meritorious unless it is in us, that is, within our power. But nothing is in our power to act or not to act unless it is from the will as from a moving principle, and not from a habit. Because as a habit is a natural cause, nothing is indifferent on account of a habit. Therefore the *ratio* of merit lies principally within the will, insofar as it elicits freely. Therefore a habit is not required for an act to be meritorious.⁷⁹²

Although he says "not required", he has in fact, in the preceding three sentences, disqualified habits completely from having any role in the meritoriousness of acts. The verdict of the *magistri* at Avignon on this paragraph, given in the critical edition, concludes:

..therefore the whole merit, insofar as it is possible to man in this life, is attributed to the freedom of the will and nothing to charity or any other habit.⁷⁹³

Although in this question Ockham is arguing explicitly against Aquinas, he seems also here to have in mind the arguments of Peter Aureol, which he

⁷⁹² Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.2, (*Theol.* III, 470): *requiritur habitus. Praeterea, nihil est meritorium nisi quia voluntarium, et hoc nisi quia libere elicited vel factum, quia nihil est meritorium nisi quod est in nobis, hoc est in nostra potestate. Sed nihil est in nostra potestate ut possimus agere et non agere nisi quia est a voluntate tamquam a principio movente, et non ab habitu. Quia cum habitus sit causa naturalis, nihil est indifferens propter habitum. Igitur ratio meriti principaliter consistit penes voluntatem, et hoc quod ipsa libere elicit. Igitur ut actus sit meritorius non requiritur habitus.*

⁷⁹³ *Theol.* III, 470, n.1.

answered in the previous question⁷⁹⁴, which affirm the loving approbation of God for virtuous habits and those who possess them, but tend to suggest that God is necessitated by the habits in question, charity above all, to grant a reward, namely, eternal life. Ockham here replies that habits in themselves, as such, good and bad, are neither praiseworthy nor blameworthy, and he includes in the non-praiseworthiness habits infused by God:

..that charity is not in itself praiseworthy I prove, because no habit is in itself praiseworthy or blameworthy. Because just as an acquired habit is not of itself either praiseworthy or blameworthy, therefore neither is another, since any other, precisely infused by God, is less in the power of the possessor than a habit acquired by freely elicited acts.⁷⁹⁵

The critical edition also gives the verdict of the *magistri* on this passage:

...And he assumes that charity of itself is not praiseworthy, which is not only contrary to moral philosophy, which says that praise is owed to the virtues, but against Sacred Scripture (1 Cor. 13), where charity is praised many times by the Apostle...⁷⁹⁶

The last paragraph of the text from this question (*Ord.*,d.17,q.2) examined at

Avignon re-asserts divine freedom and *potentia absoluta*:

..whether charity is in the soul or not, and the act elicited, it is still in the power of God to accept that act as meritorious or not. Therefore the same act which in one way is elicited by someone having charity and is meritorious, God can by his absolute power not accept it, and then it would not be meritorious, and yet it would be the same act and the same charity.⁷⁹⁷

Ockham: The Nature of Sin

For Ockham, as for Aquinas, sin or evil has no real being of its own. However, while for Thomas it represents a privation of orderedness to the good in an act,

⁷⁹⁴ Ockham, *Ordinatio*,d.17,q.1,(*Theol.*III,440-466); see also Adams, *Ockham*, Vol.2,1266-1273.

⁷⁹⁵ Ockham, *Ordinatio*,d.17,q.2,(*Theol.*III,471): *Quod autem caritas non sit de se laudabilis probo, quia nullus habitus est de se laudabilis. Quia sicut habitus adquisitus non est de se laudabilis nec vituperabilis, ita nec alius, cum quilibet alius, praecise infusus a Deo, minus sit in potestate habentis quam habitus adquisitus ex actibus libere elicitis.*

⁷⁹⁶ *Theol.*III,471,n.2.

⁷⁹⁷ Ockham, *Ordinatio*,d.17,q.2,(*Theol.*III,472-3), my trans.: *sive caritas insit animae sive non insit, et actu elicito, adhuc est in potestate Dei acceptare illum actum tamquam meritorium vel non acceptare. Unde idem actus qui modo elicitor ab habente caritatem et est meritorius, posset Deus de potentia Dei absoluta non acceptare eum, et tunc non esset meritorius, et tamen esset idem actus et caritas eadem.*

naturally, not only supernaturally, affecting the agent, for Ockham it is a word signifying an act of commission or omission, being a failure in obligation, entailing forfeiture and privation of some future blessing or reward only:

I say that sin is not privation of some good actually inhering, or which at some time was inhering. But it is a privation of a future good which ought to have inhered if he had not sinned..⁷⁹⁸

This assignment of the consequences of sin entirely to future retribution parallels the corresponding assignment of the consequences of virtue solely and entirely to future reward, with no implications for human nature now. He sets the seal on it by means of his semantics:

I say that sin is not a real being or a being of reason. But as has been said elsewhere of goodness, truth and other connotative concepts⁷⁹⁹ which have only a nominal, and not a real definition, or a definition of reason, because such things do not signify some one thing or some one reason, but signify many things, one in the nominative case and others in an oblique case, therefore of such things taken in the abstract no one real thing is predicated... Therefore I say of sin that it is not called some one real thing or being of reason, but it signifies and stands for (*importat*) just this: a previous act of commission or omission, concerning which someone has an obligation, on account of which the person is ordained to eternal punishment. Therefore when it is asked, what is sin? it must be said that it has no real definition, but only a nominal definition. And therefore it should not be conceded that it is a real being or a being of reason, but many real things are truly posited in its nominal definition. Therefore it can be conceded in some way that it is nothing, because it is not some one thing precisely, nor many things simultaneously, but it is one name or concept signifying and standing for a number of things.⁸⁰⁰

⁷⁹⁸ Ockham, *Sent.* IV, q. 11, (*Theol.* VII, 223-4): *...dico quod peccatum non est privatio alicuius boni inhaerentis actualiter, vel quod aliquando infuit. Sed est privatio boni futuri quod deberet inesse si non pecasset..*

⁷⁹⁹ Absolute and connotative terms, see p.247 below.

⁸⁰⁰ Ockham, *Sent.* IV, q. 11, (*Theol.* VII, 224-5), my trans.: *dico quod peccatum non est ens reale nec rationis. Sed sicut alias dictum est de bono, vero et aliis conceptibus connotativis quae tantum habent quid nominis et non quid rei nec rationis, quia talia non significant aliquam unam rem nec aliquam unam rationem, sed significant multa, unum in recto et alia in obliquo, et ideo de talibus in abstracto sumptis nihil unum reale praedicatur... Ita dico de peccato quod non dicit aliquam unam rem realem vel rationis, sed significat et importat totum istud: actum in praeteritum commissum, vel omissionem actus ad quem aliquis obligatur, propter quem talis ordinatur ad poenam aeternam. Et ideo quando quaeritur, quid est peccatum, dicendum est quod non habet quid rei sed tantum quid nominis. Et ideo nec debet concedi quod est ens reale nec ens rationis, sed bene in definitione exprimente quid nominis eius ponuntur multa realia. Et ideo potest sic aliquo modo concedi quod est nihil, quia non est aliqua res una praecise nec multae res simul, sed est unum nomen vel conceptus significans et importans plures res.*

Consequently, in an account of the nature of sin and forgiveness which unmistakably presages the Lutheran account to come, Ockham describes the removal of sin as follows:

..I say that for sin to be removed (*deleti*) is not for some absolute or relative (*respectivum*) thing to be removed or separated from the sinner, but it is an act committed or omitted, not to be imputed to eternal punishment.⁸⁰¹

While this account of sin as having only forensic significance derived from obligation certainly finds strong support in Scotus (p.203 above), the same can hardly be said for Aquinas and Bonaventure. Both might agree that sin and evil are literally nothing, in the sense in which a privation is nothing, but Thomas's account of natural finality, and growth, by the practice of virtue, in graced connaturality with the divine, and Bonaventure's account of the 'spiritual senses' and the soul's journey into God clearly belong to an entirely different anthropology and soteriology.

Ockham's account of sin emphasises the moral neutrality of acts-in-themselves. He most often resorts to the example described above of someone who goes to church at one time from an intention to love and honour God, and later out of vainglory, for the sake of appearances. The outward act is identical, but the act of will giving it its moral value now makes it evil. Similarly, no act has moral value unless it is voluntary. Another example he gives more than once is of someone who

voluntarily throws himself off a cliff and then repents and has a meritorious act of willing against his fall for the sake of God. But during the fall the act is not within the power of his will. Therefore, the fall is not necessarily vicious.⁸⁰²

⁸⁰¹ Ockham, *Sent.* IV, q. 11, (*Theol.* VII, 202):...*dico quod peccatum deleri non est aliquam rem absolutam vel respectivam a peccatore removeri vel separari, sed est actum commissum vel omissum ad poenam aeternam non imputari.*

⁸⁰² Ockham, *Quodlibet*, III, q. 14, (*Theol.* IX, 254), Freddoso, 212.

The *New Dictionary of Theology*, in the entry under 'Grace', describes the fate that befell the doctrine of grace from the fourteenth century onwards as follows:

In place of appreciative attention to the gifts of divine intimacy, theology occupied itself with testing the limits of divine power in improbable limit-cases.⁸⁰³

Such an 'improbable limit-case' may well be represented by Ockham's speculations concerning a possible command by God to hate Him:

..every will can conform itself to a divine precept. But God can command (*praecipere*) that the created will hate him, therefore the created will can do this. Besides, everything that can be a righteous act *in via*, can be a righteous act *in patria*. But to hate God can be a righteous act *in via*, if commanded by God, therefore likewise *in patria*.⁸⁰⁴

Boehner describes this as being, if taken in the ethical realm, "the only real antinomy in Ockham's philosophy", in that, even a command by God 'not to love Him' could not be obeyed, since in obeying one would be loving Him. He accounts for this passage in Ockham as follows:

It is important to note that this possibility is admitted in the purely ontological and logical realm. For in this realm there cannot be a contradiction, since it is a fact that creatures can command others to hate God; the command, therefore, is a reality, considered as a mental or spoken sentence, and every reality has God as its primary cause.⁸⁰⁵

If this is how Ockham intends it to be taken, he does not say so; and as this occurs in an article about human freedom-of-indifference in the matter of willing or 'nilling' beatitude, it would be entirely in keeping with Ockham's usual practice to complement it with a reminder of God's indifferent freedom *de potentia absoluta*. In addition, any such command issued by a human being would not entail an obligation to obey it, but the opposite. However, the insuperable problem (in any sense) of how such a divine command could be

⁸⁰³ Q.Quesnell, in *New Dictionary of Theology*, Komonchak, Collins and Lane eds., Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 1990,441.

⁸⁰⁴ Ockham, *Sent.*IV,q.16,(*Theol.*VII,352),my trans.: *omnis voluntas potest se conformare praecepto divino. Sed Deus potest praecipere quod voluntas creata odiat eum, igitur voluntas creata potest hoc facere. Praeterea, omne quod potest esse actus rectus in via, et in patria. Sed odire Deum potest esse actus rectus in via, puta si praecipiat a Deo, igitur in patria.*

⁸⁰⁵ Philotheus Boehner, OFM, *Ockham, Philosophical Writings*, Hackett, Indianapolis,1990, Introduction, xlix-l.

obeyed without loving and hating God at the same time remains. As Ockham himself says elsewhere: "No one can hate God by his ordained will".⁸⁰⁶

Ockham: The Holy Spirit and Created Grace

Ockham argues at length (see also pp.208-11 above) that God's freedom and sovereignty over the redemptive process demand that by his *potentia absoluta* He is not bound to bestow eternal life on anyone, no matter what graces he may possess, or to reject anyone even if not in possession of any:

Therefore I say... that neither charity, nor any other habit, necessitates God to giving someone eternal life. Indeed by his absolute power He can confer charity on someone and afterwards annihilate him, and likewise preserve someone perpetually in charity and never be disposed to give him eternal life. The second conclusion is that God can, by his absolute power, accept someone without any such form in-forming him.⁸⁰⁷

Ockham frequently uses the terms 'dear' (*carus*) and 'accepted' (*acceptus*) to describe someone whom God deems fit for eternal life, and relates this to charity in such a way as to emphasise the divine subjectivity:

Whence 'charity' is taken in two ways. In one way precisely for a certain absolute habit infused, and in this sense it is not a connotative name.⁸⁰⁸ The other way, 'charity' is understood as being abstracted with respect to this concrete term 'dear', connoting someone [God in this case] to whom the person is dear. Without charity someone can in the first way be dear [to God] by the absolute power of God, but not without charity in the second way mentioned.⁸⁰⁹

By his *potentia ordinata*, God wills to perfect and save the rational creature, but not without charity:

⁸⁰⁶ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, I, d.1, (*Theol.* I, 375): *...nullus potest ordinate odire Deum.*

⁸⁰⁷ Ockham, *Q. Variarum*, I, (*Theol.* VIII, 19): *Ideo dico... quod caritas, nec quicumque alius habitus, necessitat Deum ad dandum alicui vitam aeternam. Immo de potentia absoluta potest conferre alicui caritatem et eum post adnihilare, et similiter in perpetuum in caritate custodire et numquam disponere [sibi] dare vitam aeternam. Secunda conclusio est quod Deus potest de potentia sua absoluta aliquem acceptare sine omni tali forma informante.*

⁸⁰⁸ For absolute and connotative terms and concepts, see p.247 below.

⁸⁰⁹ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.1, (*Theol.* III, 466): *Unde 'caritas' dupliciter accipitur. Uno modo praecise pro quodam habitu absolute infuso, et sic non est nomen connotativum. Aliter accipitur 'caritas' ut est abstractum respectu istius concreti 'carum', connotando aliquem cui ille est carus. Sine caritate primo modo potest aliquis de potentia Dei absoluta esse carus, non sine caritate secundo modo dicta.*

I say that the Holy Spirit cannot by the ordained power of God be given to a rational creature as being accepted as worthy of eternal life, without the habit of charity.⁸¹⁰

In the same question, Ockham specifies “without charity and other gifts”,⁸¹¹ meaning evidently the other gifts without which charity is not infused, namely infused faith and hope. Likewise, the soul’s perfection does not take place without the concurrent role of the acquired virtues:

Because just as the will, insofar as it is naturally perfectible, is not denied its natural perfection as a cause.., and consequently neither is the natural habit nor the act elicited by the habit mediating denied to it, so neither is supernatural perfection denied to the same will insofar as it is supernaturally perfectible, and consequently insofar as it has a supernatural habit and act. Therefore, since the will is thus accepted by God, it follows that it will have such a habit.⁸¹²

By God’s *potentia ordinata*, infused charity is also necessary for producing meritorious acts:

..some created [i.e. infused] charity...is presupposed by every meritorious act. Neither does anyone in fact elicit a meritorious act without such charity formally informing him. And this should be held on account of the authority of the Saints, who say this.⁸¹³

However, the supernatural element in the act that attains beatitude is evidently, for Ockham, merely the *sine qua non*, according to God’s ordained power, for that attainment. This is because the act involved, of loving God above all and for his own sake, does not of itself (as noted above, p.216) “exceed the whole faculty of human nature”. In the same question, where he is

⁸¹⁰ Ockham, *Q. Variae*, I, (*Theol.* VIII, 23): *..dico quod Spiritus Sanctus non potest dari creaturae rationali de potentia Dei ordinata sic quod acceptatur tamquam digna vita aeterna sine habitu caritatis.*

⁸¹¹ Ockham, *Q. Variae*, I, (*Theol.* VIII, 16).

⁸¹² Ockham, *Q. Variae*, I, (*Theol.* VIII, 23-4): *Quia sicut voluntati, quantum est perfectibilis naturaliter, non negatur perfectio sua naturalis tamquam causa.., et per consequens non negatur sibi habitus naturalis nec actus elicited mediante habitu, ita nec eidem voluntati, in quantum est perfectibilis supernaturaliter, negatur perfectio supernaturalis, et per consequens ut sic habebit habitum supernaturalem et actum. Cum igitur voluntas sic sit accepta Deo, sequitur ut sic habebit talem habitum.*

⁸¹³ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d. 17, q. 3, (*Theol.* III, 477-8): *..caritas aliqua creata...praesupponitur omni actui meritorio. Nec aliquis de facto actum meritorium elicit sine tali caritate formaliter informante. Et hoc tenendum est propter auctoritates Sanctorum, quae hoc sonant.*

asking “whether an act of the will can be meritorious without charity formally informing the soul”, Ockham answers in the affirmative, but, on this occasion, without indicating that his answer is based on the *potentia absoluta Dei*:

Whoever can be accepted by God without charity, can without charity do a meritorious work; but it was proved earlier⁸¹⁴ that someone can be accepted by God without charity.⁸¹⁵

This is followed by a rebuttal of Aquinas’s argument on the same topic, but (as ever in such cases) without mentioning that for Aquinas the normative context for arguments concerning the dealings of God with creatures is the *potentia ordinata Dei*, or what one scholar calls “conditional necessity”.⁸¹⁶ Aquinas’s argument⁸¹⁷ is on the basis that “an act of charity exceeds the whole faculty of human nature”, and is therefore from some principle superior to human nature, i.e. “some habit superadded to the will”.⁸¹⁸ Ockham replies:

This I call simply false, because a good movement of the will by purely natural means God can accept from his graciousness, and consequently such an act will be meritorious from the gracious acceptance of God. Therefore insofar as such an act is meritorious the [supernatural] habit in question is not required necessarily.⁸¹⁹

It is clear from this that Ockham takes a reply based on the *potentia absoluta Dei* to be decisive in response to an argument based on the normative status of the *potentia ordinata Dei*. Add to this the very different view he takes of the capabilities of human nature (taking his cue from Scotus), and it appears that divine/human relations vis-à-vis redeeming grace have taken on a character

⁸¹⁴ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.1, (*Theol.* III, 445f, 452f): on these two occasions, Ockham does make it clear that the *potentia absoluta Dei* is the context.

⁸¹⁵ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.2, (*Theol.* III, 467-8): *Qui potest sine caritate esse acceptus Deo, potest sine caritate facere opus meritorium; sed probatum est prius quod aliquis potest sine caritate esse acceptus Deo.*

⁸¹⁶ Lucan Freppert, *The Basis of Morality According to William Ockham*, Chicago, Franciscan Herald Press, 1988, 111.

⁸¹⁷ Aquinas, *Q.D. de Caritate*, q.un., a.1c, (Leo, [pp.t.b.i.]), E. Atkins and T. Williams, trans. 109-111.

⁸¹⁸ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.2, (*Theol.* III, 468).

⁸¹⁹ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.2, (*Theol.* III, 469): *Istud reputo simpliciter falsum, quia bonum motum voluntatis ex puris naturalibus elicitum potest Deus acceptare de gratia sua, et per consequens talis actus ex gratuita Dei acceptatione erit meritorius. Igitur ad hoc quod talis actus sit meritorius non requiritur talis habitus necessario.*

significantly different from the account given of them by Aquinas and Bonaventure. Here no transformation and elevation of human nature is taking place: nature is in any case intrinsically capable of producing by itself the actions deemed necessary. What is left for God to do? Prevenient grace (*gratia praeveniens*), by which God first moves the soul to repentance and conversion, healing grace (*gratia sanans*), by which sin is forgiven and the soul strengthened, and elevating grace (*gratia elevans*), by which the soul is made capable of divine intimacy and participation in divine life, to none of which Ockham makes any reference in his treatise on grace, seem to have been replaced by what might be called '*gratia concurrens*' – that is, by a sort of intensification of general divine concurrence.

This leaves the question of the three categories of grace which together comprise all of the above, namely, operative grace (*gratia operans*), which describes all of the transforming action performed by God alone in the soul, and co-operative grace (*gratia co-operans*), by which, once the soul becomes sufficiently responsive and God-orientated, God co-operates with its actions, and thirdly, habitual or sanctifying grace (*gratia gratum faciens*), a category which includes all of the above, and a term which Ockham (probably because of its inclusive nature) does use.⁸²⁰ In his account of the gift of the Holy Spirit as indwelling, he occasionally says something that might pass for a reference to the reality represented by *gratia co-operans*. In the performance of meritorious acts, created charity and the Holy Spirit as gift have distinct causal roles:

.. whatever distinct habits are possessed, are given to rational creatures as distinct gifts. But the Holy Spirit and charity are possessed by the rational creature by distinct habits... because charity is possessed by the rational creature as a form existing subjectively in the soul. The Holy Spirit is

⁸²⁰ See below, p.236-7, *Sent.* IV, q.11.

possessed by the rational creature as partial cause – according to that way of speaking – concurring in causing a meritorious act. These however are [the acts] of distinct habits.⁸²¹

However, neither charity as ‘a form existing subjectively’ nor the Holy Spirit as partial cause is sufficient for the production of meritorious acts, as neither provides the voluntary element:

..just as no act is voluntary which is from an exterior principle [such as the Holy Spirit], so no act is voluntary – as voluntary is distinguished from natural - which is entirely from a principle acting naturally. Therefore if an act of charity was from charity and not from the will, it would not be a voluntary act... since charity itself does naturally whatever it does. But for the will itself to act concordantly with charity is a voluntary act, not because it is from charity, but because it is from the will. Thus if the Holy Spirit and not the will were to cause an act of charity it would not be a voluntary act, that is, the will would not be willing freely. But the same [act] moved by the will [together] with the Holy Spirit will be voluntary, because it is freely elicited by the will.⁸²²

Therefore it is the action of the will, concurrently with created grace and the Holy Spirit, that makes acts meritorious.

In *Q. Variæ* I, in an article concerning the Holy Spirit as gift, Ockham raises a doubt as to whether the name ‘gift’ is given as being proper to the Holy Spirit personally. He answers that

..any gift can be understood in two ways. In one way (1) for something freely produced in the manner of the will and liberty... This is [said] properly of the Holy Spirit because it is produced in the manner of a gift and of

⁸²¹ Ockham, *Q. Variæ*, I, (VIII, 16): *quaecumque distinctis habitibus habentur, distinctis donationibus donantur creaturae rationali. Sed Spiritus Sanctus et caritas distinctis habitibus habentur a creatura rationali... quia caritas habetur a creatura rationali ut forma existens subiective in anima. Spiritus Sanctus habetur a creatura rationali ut causa partialis – secundum illum modum loquendi – concurrens ad causandum actum meritorium. Istae autem sunt distinctae habitationes.*

⁸²² Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d. 17, q. 2, (*Theol.* III, 473), my parentheses: *...sicut nullus actus est voluntarius qui est totaliter a principio exteriori, ita nullus actus est voluntarius – secundum quod voluntarium distinguitur contra naturale – qui est totaliter a principio naturaliter agente. Igitur si actus caritatis esset a caritate et non a voluntate, non esset actus voluntarius...cum ipsa caritas agat naturaliter quidquid agit. Sed ipsa voluntate concorditer movente cum caritate est actus voluntarius, non quia est a caritate sed quia est a voluntate. Ita si Spiritus Sanctus causaret actum caritatis et non voluntas, non esset actus voluntarius, hoc est, illa voluntas non libere vellet. Sed ipsa voluntate movente cum Spiritu Sancto erit voluntarius, quia libere elicitur a voluntate.*

freedom and not in the manner of a likeness... the Son of God is produced in the manner of a likeness and the Holy Spirit is not.⁸²³

Ockham is clearly making a distinction here between the divine processions *ad intra*, taken together, which take place of necessity, and the procession of the Holy Spirit as Gift, taken individually (but also *ad intra*), which he calls “in the manner of the will and liberty” to differentiate it from the generation of the Son as likeness. Then he points out that the gift given to souls *ad extra* is not the Holy Spirit individually:

In another way (2) it is something united to someone as existing and co-operating with him in his freedom and in his possession of all his actions... In [this] second way it is not properly a gift of the Holy Spirit because in this way it is fitting to three persons and [three] free gifts, because all three persons are thus given to a rational nature. Because in this way it is given only to co-operate with a rational creature in eliciting every act he rightly wishes to elicit in the manner in which one is given to the other, because he wills whatever the other wills...But three persons, and free gifts, co-exist and co-operate in the action of a creature rightly elicited.⁸²⁴

This fits the description of Augustinian *gratia co-operans*, even if Ockham does not refer to it as such.

In the *Ordinatio*, he establishes that “By the ordained power of God the Holy Spirit cannot be given without charity”, but does not establish the precise relationship between the Holy Spirit and charity. Also in the *Ordinatio* he identifies the Holy Spirit with charity:

⁸²³ Ockham, Q. *Variae*, I, a.2, (VIII, 22):...*dupliciter accipitur aliquod donum. Uno modo aliquid liberaliter et per modum voluntatis et libertatis...(Hic) est proprium Spiritui Sancto quia producitur per modum doni et libertatis et non per modum similis... Filius Dei producitur per modum similis et Spiritus Sanctus non.*

⁸²⁴ Ockham, Q. *Variae*, I, a.2, (Theol. VIII, 22-3): *Alio modo est aliquid collatum ut sit exsistens cum aliquo et coagens ut sit in libertate et in possessione sua in omni actione sua...Secundo modo non est donum proprium Spiritui Sancto quia sic competit tribus personis et donis gratuitis, quia sic omnes personae dantur naturae rationali. Quia sic dari non est nisi coagere creaturae rationali ad eliciendum omnem actum quem vult recte elicere ad modum quo unus datur alteri, quia vult quidquid ipse vult... Sed tres personae et etiam dona gratuita coexistunt et coagunt in actione creaturae recte elicita.*

..it is rather to be conceded that charity is the Holy Spirit, because the name of charity principally signifies the Holy Spirit directly (*et in recto*), but the creature indirectly (*in obliquo*).⁸²⁵

In the same question he distinguishes “charity which is the Holy Spirit” from “created charity”, but seems to identify the former more closely with acceptability for salvation:

..it is clear that charity which is the Holy Spirit necessarily distinguishes between the sons of the kingdom and the sons of perdition. Created charity, however, distinguishes in practice, in its own way, but not necessarily.⁸²⁶

Ockham: Grace and the Sacraments

Ockham’s failure to mention grace under the names of its various roles, as *sanans, elevans, preveniens, co-operans* etc. turns out to be part of a project to subsume all of them under the single term ‘grace’. In his account of grace in the sacrament of penance, he uses his ‘razor’ to eliminate the others, leaving a two-fold remnant:

Therefore I say that grace is twofold: one is an absolute quality informing the soul, the other is gratuitous by the will of God. Speaking of grace in the first way, I say that *gratum faciens* [habitual] grace and the grace of the virtues and the sacramental grace of any sacrament is the same... This is clear, because plurality is not to be posited without necessity. But all of them can equally well be preserved by positing one grace only as by positing many, therefore only one is to be posited, and especially because that [i.e. positing many] is supported neither by authority nor by reason nor by experience.⁸²⁷

The latter statement must be highly questionable, as the division among the graces, established to specify and illuminate the many different ways God works in the soul, has its origin firmly among the Fathers, notably Augustine.

⁸²⁵ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.3, (*Theol.* III, 478).

⁸²⁶ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.3, (*Theol.* III, 479).

⁸²⁷ Ockham, *Sent.* IV, q.11, (*Theol.* VII, 213): *Ideo dico quod duplex est gratia: una est qualitas absoluta informans animam, alia est gratuita Dei voluntas. Primo modo loquendo de gratia, dico quod eadem est gratia gratum faciens et gratia virtutum et gratia sacramentalis cuiuscumque sacramenti. Hoc patet, quia pluralitas non est ponenda sine necessitate. Sed omnia possunt salvari aequè bene ponendo unam gratiam tantum sicut ponendo plures, igitur est tantum ponenda una, et maxime ex quo nec est ad hoc auctoritas nec ratio nec experientia.*

Aquinas makes abundant use of it. Ockham considers it sufficient that one grace be divided among the different virtues:

..because every grace is posited either to render man worthy of eternal life, or for working meritoriously, or for removing defects inclining to sin and drawing man away from the good. But all these are preserved by one grace with various virtues.⁸²⁸

It is noticeable that the grace-terms Ockham seeks to dispense with are all descriptions of divine action in the soul. Apart from divine concurrence, the virtues are descriptions of what we do – not of what God does. We are left with no terms to describe the latter. Aquinas also acknowledges one grace performing many different functions, as does Bonaventure, and Scotus to a lesser extent, but all retain the language of divine action in the soul as well.⁸²⁹

Ockham's account of the relationship of grace to the sacraments is of a decidedly 'occasionalist' nature, as this comment by Marilyn Adams shows:

Since, for Ockham, God is utterly free in the redemptive process, God is not bound by sacraments any more than He is bound by anything else. Not only are sacraments not logically necessary or sufficient for the infusion of charity or grace, Ockham denies that they are its efficient causes either. He agrees with his opponents that the sacraments are not natural causes of infused grace. But he contends further that they cannot be instrumental causes. Rather they are causes *sine quibus non*. By divine ordinance there is a constant conjunction between someone's receiving the sacrament of baptism under certain circumstances and his being infused with grace. But this constant conjunction holds, not because of any power (*virtus*) – whether natural or supernatural – inhering in the sacrament, but because God wills to produce grace in the soul whenever the sacrament is thus received.⁸³⁰

⁸²⁸ Ockham, *Sent.* IV, q. 11, (*Theol.* VII, 213-14): *...quia omnis gratia ponitur vel ut reddat hominem dignum vita aeterna, vel ad meritorie operandum, vel ad tollendum defectus inclinantes ad peccatum et retrahentes hominem a bono. Sed omnia ista salvantur per unam gratiam cum aliis virtutibus.*

⁸²⁹ E.g. Aquinas, *De Caritate*, I. 1; Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, V. 4. 6, (de Vinck, 196); Scotus, *Ordinatio*, II, d. 27, q. un, n. 12, (*Vat.* VIII, 288-9).

⁸³⁰ Adams, *Ockham*, Vol. 2, 1278.

Ockham: The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

As already noted (p.168 above), no account of the beatitudes and fruits of the Holy Spirit, if one ever existed, appears in Ockham's extant works. In any case, they would not be susceptible of the treatment he gives to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. His main concern is to pose the logical question as to whether the gifts are necessary at all. For this purpose, he uses the same argument that he does regarding the acquired and infused theological virtues⁸³¹: that, since they refer to actions of the same *ratio*, infused virtues cannot logically be said to confer anything which is entirely above and beyond the capabilities of human nature. Here he uses faith, rather than charity, as the comparison. As with the infused virtue of faith, the gifts of the Holy Spirit cannot function without the prior disposition and assistance provided by their acquired counterparts:

..just as someone can never elicit an act of believing, regarding any article [of faith], mediated by infused faith, unless he has acquired faith, which is of a different *ratio* to infused faith... it is not possible for someone to have the aforesaid habits called gifts and to elicit any act regarding the objects of those habits, unless besides the said infused habits he has other acquired habits regarding the same objects, as is clear from experience. And this is proved similarly as regarding infused and acquired faith.⁸³²

Ockham goes on to ask whether it is necessary to posit infused gifts at all. It can be said that they are not always infused habits, because, "plurality is not to be posited without necessity"; neither does he find any demonstrable reason, or experience, or even "the authority of Sacred Scripture" to justify positing them,⁸³³ and, besides, they "can always be acquired naturally". Here again, Ockham's purpose is not to dismiss the infusion of gifts altogether, but to

⁸³¹ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.2, (*Theol.* III, 472), p.216 above.

⁸³² Ockham, *Q. Variae*, VI, a.8, (*Theol.* VIII, 244): *..sicut numquam aliquis potest elicere actum credendi circa aliquem articulum mediante fide infusa nisi habeat fidem adquisitam quae est alterius rationis a fide infusa...ita non est possibile quod aliquis habeat praedictos habitus qui dicuntur dona et eliciat aliquem actum circa obiecta illorum habituum, nisi praeter dictos habitus infusos habeat alios habitus adquirentes respectu eorundem obiectorum, sicut patet per experientiam. Et consimiliter probatur hoc sicut probatur de fide infusa et adquisita.*

⁸³³ Ockham, *Q. Variae*, VI, a.8, (*Theol.* VIII, 245).

minimise the necessity of their being posited. Even the gift of languages given to the Apostles at Pentecost (Acts 2:3-11), he says, was not something that cannot be acquired naturally. Infused and acquired habits also have the same objects (although he expresses a doubt, without answering it, as to what the objects of the infused gifts might be), and are therefore of the same species or *ratio*. He mentions by name understanding (*intellectus*) and knowledge (*scientia*), and says of the latter:

For acquired knowledge sufficiently inclines the intellect to knowing any conclusion without any infused knowledge. Thus if knowledge were in fact infused, it would sufficiently incline the same intellect to knowing the same conclusion without any acquired knowledge.⁸³⁴

He sees no evident reason to posit infused habits apart from the authority of Sacred Scripture, and accepts that this is found for infused faith; but as he speaks only of faith for the rest of the article, a doubt is implied concerning the positing of infused gifts; neither does he resolve it elsewhere.

Ockham: The Charge of Pelagianism

Ockham was summoned to the papal court, then in Avignon, in 1324, while a body of his work, submitted by John Lutterell, was examined for heresy by a commission of six Masters of theology, including Lutterell. The commission was charged by Pope John XXII with examining 51 articles drawn from his commentary on the *Sentences*. The *magistri* delivered their report in 1326, and subsequently, according to Pelzer,⁸³⁵ “attainted the principal theological work of the innovator, and reproved 50 of his affirmations, mostly on a charge of error

⁸³⁴ Ockham, *Q. Variae*, VI, a. 8, (*Theol. VIII*, 245-6): *Nam scientia adquisita sufficienter inclinat intellectum ad sciendum aliquam conclusionem absque omni scientia infusa. Ita si scientia de facto infunderetur, inclinaret sufficienter eundem intellectum ad sciendum eandem conclusionem sine omni scientia adquisita.*

⁸³⁵ A. Pelzer, *Les 51 articles de Guillaume Occam censurés en Avignon, en 1326*, *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, 18, 1922, 240-270, 248.

and heresy". Pelzer, writing in 1922,⁸³⁶ expresses some surprise at the outcome for Ockham, as no formal conviction for heresy was ever brought.⁸³⁷

The charge of Pelagianism was certainly one of the most weighty and detailed brought against Ockham, and took its cue from his rebuttal of Aquinas in *Ordinatio*, d.17. Ockham here quotes a passage from Aquinas's *De Caritate*:

An act of charity exceeds the whole faculty of human nature, therefore it follows that it is from some principle that is not interior to human nature. But it cannot precisely be from some exterior principle, namely the Holy Spirit. Therefore it must be from some habit superadded to the will. The minor is clear, that just as natural movement is from some intrinsic principle, so the movement of the will is from something intrinsic. Therefore if the act of charity was entirely from some exterior mover, it would not be voluntary. It follows similarly that it would not be meritorious, because those things are meritorious which are in some way in us; but if it were entirely from an exterior mover, it would not be in us to act or not to act.⁸³⁸

Ockham opposes this on several points, all of them connected to his over-riding concern for divine gratuity. Firstly,

This I call simply false, because a good movement of the will elicited by purely natural means God can accept from his graciousness, and consequently such an act will be meritorious from the gracious acceptance of God. Therefore insofar as such an act is meritorious the habit [of charity] in question is not required necessarily.⁸³⁹

Where Thomas's account of divine gratuity involves the incapability of unaided human powers to act meritoriously, for Ockham, nature, as such, is irrelevant

⁸³⁶ Pelzer's account, together with that of J.Koch, 1935-6 (see below), is still the most detailed.

⁸³⁷ Ockham's subsequent excommunication in 1328, following his flight from Avignon in company with Michael of Cesena, Minister General of the Franciscans, and Bonagrazio of Bergamo, had nothing at all to do with the writings for which he was summoned to Avignon in the first place. The Franciscan order at the time was in contention with John XXII over a matter concerning the poverty of Christ and the Apostles, and the Franciscan poverty modelled on it. On this count, Ockham had convinced himself that the Pope was a heretic and his holding of the office therefore null and void. He was to spend the rest of his life under the protection of the Emperor (who was also in frequent contention with the papacy), mainly in Munich, writing polemics against John XXII, and aspects of papal authority. Whether significant or not, this is also the Pope who had been instrumental in bringing about the canonisation of Aquinas in 1323.

⁸³⁸ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.2, (*Theol.* III, 468), quoting Aquinas, *De Caritate*, 1c, Atkins, 110.

⁸³⁹ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.2, (*Theol.* III, 469): *Istud reputo simpliciter falsum, quia bonum motum voluntatis ex puris naturalibus elicited potest Deus acceptare de gratia sua, et per consequens talis actus ex gratuita Dei acceptatione erit meritorius. Igitur ad hoc quod talis actus sit meritorius non requiritur talis habitus necessario.*

either way, and his comparatively exalted (Scotistic) view of human natural ability only serves to emphasise the irrelevance:

Besides, everything [someone] can do sufficiently of himself in a demeritorious act, he can by the absolute power of God do of himself in a meritorious act... since demeritorious and meritorious acts are contraries⁸⁴⁰... But the will can of itself be in demeritorious act, therefore it does not involve a contradiction for the will to be placed in meritorious act by purely natural powers. However, that act will not be meritorious by purely natural powers, but solely from the graciousness of God; not formally informing the will, but gratuitously accepting that act elicited purely by natural means.⁸⁴¹

Secondly, as divine gratuity, and not natural capability or incapability, is the principal issue at stake:

Because no act by purely natural powers, nor from any created cause, can be meritorious, but from the graciousness of God willingly and freely accepting. And therefore just as God willingly and freely accepts a good movement of the will as meritorious when it is elicited by someone having charity, so by his absolute power He can accept the same movement of the will even if He does not infuse charity.⁸⁴²

It may be that the *magistri* at Avignon failed to grasp the full significance of Ockham's use of the *potentia absoluta Dei*, never having encountered the routine use of such a device before. The same may have applied to Ockham's over-riding concern for divine freedom and gratuity. William Courtenay tells us that, of the six members of the examining commission, five were "wedded to late thirteenth century realism", being of basically Thomist formation and

⁸⁴⁰ Here he makes use of the scholastic distinction between contraries (which are not mutually exclusive) and contradictories (which are) to delineate human natural capabilities vis-à-vis merit and demerit.

⁸⁴¹ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.2, (*Theol.* III, 469-70): *Praeterea, omne illud quod potest ex se sufficienter in actum demeritorium, potest de potentia Dei absoluta in actum meritorium ex se... cum actus demeritorius et meritorius sint contrarii... Sed voluntas potest ex se in actum demeritorium, ergo non includit contradictionem voluntatem ex puris naturalibus ferri in actum meritorium. Non tamen erit ille actus meritorius ex puris naturalibus, sed ex sola gratia Dei; non formaliter voluntatem informante, sed illum actum ex puris naturalibus elicited gratuite acceptante.*

⁸⁴² Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.2, (*Theol.* III, 471-2): *Quia nullus actus ex puris naturalibus, nec ex quacumque causa creata, potest esse meritorius, sed ex gratia Dei voluntarie et libere acceptante. Et ideo sicut Deus libere acceptat bonum motum voluntatis tamquam meritorium quando elicitor ab habente caritatem, ita de potentia sua absoluta posset acceptare eundem motum voluntatis etiam si non infunderet caritatem.*

background. The only one who was “somewhat sympathetic to Scotistic theology” was Durand of St. Pourcain, “a Dominican theologian and bishop of Meaux, whose un-Thomistic views had earlier brought him into conflict with theologians in his order”.⁸⁴³

It did not escape the commission’s notice that, on the face of it at least, the gifts of grace are being devalued. Although Ockham agrees that “nothing is meritorious unless it is voluntary”, he excludes habits altogether from the sphere of the voluntary:

But nothing is in our power to act or not to act unless it is from the will as from a moving principle, and not from a habit. Because as a habit is a natural cause, nothing is indifferent [i.e. free] on account of a habit. Therefore the *ratio* of merit lies principally in the power of the will, insofar as it elicits freely. Therefore an act does not require a habit in order to be meritorious.⁸⁴⁴

Clearly, the idea of a habit actually producing, or enhancing, freedom is very far from Ockham’s thinking. The *magistri*, however, are concerned at the separation being effected between merit and habit, especially that of charity:

..and thus the whole merit, insofar as it is possible to man in this life, is attributed [by Ockham] to the freedom of the will and nothing to charity or any other habit.⁸⁴⁵

At the same time, Ockham’s exaltation of free will leads him to value acquired over infused habits in this respect, while claiming that neither is praiseworthy in itself:

⁸⁴³ William J. Courtenay, *The Academic and Intellectual Worlds of Ockham*, Cambridge Companion to Ockham, 25.

⁸⁴⁴ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d. 17, q. 2, (*Theol.* III, 470): *Sed nihil est in nostra potestate ut possimus agere et non agere nisi quia est a voluntate tamquam a principio movente, et non ab habitu. Quia cum habitus sit causa naturalis, nihil est indifferens propter habitum. Igitur ratio meriti principaliter consistit penes voluntatem, ex hoc quod ipsa libere elicit. Igitur ut actus sit meritorius non requiritur habitus.*

⁸⁴⁵ Report of the *Magistri*, 1326; A. Pelzer, *Les 51 articles*, 252: *..et sic totum meritum, quantum est possibile homini viatori, attribuit libertati voluntatis et nihil caritati vel alii habitui*; also J. Koch, *Neue Aktenstücke zu dem gegen Wilhelm Ockham in Avignon geführten Prozess*, *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale* VII, 1935, 353-380 and VIII, 1936, 79-93, 168-197, 86.

..but the act of loving God above all, with charity which is not in itself praiseworthy, is meritorious; therefore it can be meritorious without that [charity]. However, that charity is not in itself praiseworthy I prove, because no habit is in itself praiseworthy. Because just as an acquired habit is not of itself either praiseworthy or blameworthy, therefore neither is another, since any other, precisely infused by God, is less in the power of the possessor than a habit acquired by freely elicited acts. But no acquired habit is praiseworthy or blameworthy of itself.⁸⁴⁶

Perhaps nowhere else in Ockham's *opus* does the sense of divine grace apparently threatening, if not actually cancelling, human freedom come across as strongly as it does in this question of the *Ordinatio*. It can hardly be surprising that the *magistri* 'scent' Pelagianism. At this point they are concerned mainly with the implications for charity:

We say that this long process [argument] contained in the preceding article is erroneous and smacks (*sapit*) of the Pelagian heresy or worse. For, regarding the *ratio* of merit possible to us in the present life, he is equating a work carried out without charity with a work carried out with charity. And through the whole deduction, it appears that he intends that a habit of charity is nothing, or, if it is [something], it is in vain, because it does nothing at all to merit [a reward], which is expressly contrary to what the Apostle says in 1 Corinthians 13..⁸⁴⁷

The accusation of Pelagianism focuses also on *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.1, the question preceding the one quoted above. Ockham is here engaged in refuting the arguments of Peter Aureol concerning the action and necessity of grace in the soul for salvation. Aureol's method of exposition tends to imply a certain necessity in the way God acts towards the soul. Ockham quotes him as follows,

⁸⁴⁶ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.2, (*Theol.* III, 471): ..*sed actus diligendi Deum super omnia cum caritate quae non est de se laudabilis est meritorius; ergo sine ea potest esse meritorius. Quod autem caritas non sit de se laudabilis probo, quia nullus habitus est de se laudabilis. Quia sicut habitus adquisitus non est de se laudabilis nec vituperabilis, ita nec alius, cum quilibet alius, praecise infusus a Deo, minus sit in potestate habentis quam habitus adquisitus ex actibus libere elicitis. Sed nullus habitus adquisitus est de se laudabilis nec vituperabilis.*

⁸⁴⁷ *Magistri report*, Pelzer, 51 Articles, 251: *Dicimus quod iste processus in predicto articulo contentus est erroneus et sapit haeresim Pelagianam vel peius. Adequat enim quantum ad rationem meriti nobis in presenti vita possibilis, opus factum sine caritate operi facto cum caritate. Et per totam deductionem apparet quod ipse et intendit quod nullus est habitus caritatis aut, si est, frustra est, quia nihil penitus facit ad meritum, quod est expresse contra dictum Apostoli prima ad Corinthios 13..*

concerning the necessity for salvation of a 'created form' of grace inhering in the soul:

Concerning this question there is one opinion [Aureol's] that in order for the soul to be gracious, dear and accepted by God, such a created and absolute form is necessarily required by someone, so that [even] by God's absolute power, without such a form it cannot be dear to God. And such a form is necessarily dear to God; and likewise the soul informed by that form. So that possessing that form, [even] by God's absolute power [the soul] cannot not be dear to God.⁸⁴⁸

The form in question is, of course, an infused habit of created charity. To understand Ockham's position, we need to be aware that, although he identifies grace, directly, with charity alone, he regards the infused (created) habit of charity as only secondary, in terms of both logical priority and importance for salvation. Whereas Thomas and Bonaventure attach primary importance for salvation (even though posterior in the soul) to uncreated grace in the form of the indwelling of the divine Persons, Ockham's focus of interest is almost entirely on the free and contingent decision of God to accept a soul for salvation (or reject and reprobate the soul for damnation). This, more than anything else, is Ockham's understanding of 'gratuitous grace' (*gratia gratis data*). It is also, in his view, the principal source of grace-making-pleasing (*gratia gratum faciens*), though he very rarely uses either of these expressions to describe grace. In this, he differs profoundly from Thomas and Bonaventure, though it is not difficult to perceive the Scotist influence involved.

Two modern scholarly accounts of Ockham's defence against the accusation of Pelagianism are those by Marilyn Adams⁸⁴⁹ and Rega Wood.⁸⁵⁰ Both see this

⁸⁴⁸ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.1, (*Theol.* III, 441): *Ad istam quaestionem est una opinio quod ad hoc quod anima sit Deo grata, cara et accepta, necessario requiritur aliqua tali forma creata et absoluta, ita quod de potentia Dei absoluta sine tali forma non potest esse Deo cara. Et ipsa forma necessario est Deo cara; et similiter anima, illa forma informata. Ita quod stante illa forma non potest de potentia Dei absoluta non esse Deo cara.*

⁸⁴⁹ Marilyn McCord Adams, *William Ockham*, Vol.2, 1987, 1279-1297.

twofold understanding of grace as the key to Ockham's defence. When Ockham denies that grace is either logically necessary or logically sufficient for salvation, he has in mind strictly and only the infused accidental form of grace. It is with regard to this that God, by his absolute power, is under no necessity or obligation whatever either to accept the soul where it is present, or to reject the soul where it is not. God can hold a soul as 'dear' (*cara*) and acceptable, or reprobate and rejected, regardless of the presence or absence of any form, or privation of form, in the soul whatever – by his absolute power.

At the heart of the issue is the question, "Which comes first, the created form in the soul, or divine acceptance?" For Aureol, the created form must come first, because by it the soul is rendered pleasing to God and acceptable for salvation. For Ockham, free and contingent divine acceptance comes first, independently of anything created, even created charity in the soul. He quotes Aureol as follows:

..that form through which by nature the soul is rendered gracious to God, does not flow into the soul from divine acceptance. This is proved because that through which divine acceptance and love is applied to the soul, and participation in which is the formal reason of the acceptance, cannot proceed from the love of God passing into the soul, because then the soul would be loved – at least in the order of reason – before such a form was in it.⁸⁵¹

For Aureol, "God is the most reasonable of lovers".⁸⁵² He, in fact, assimilates God's necessary love of Himself and his own justice to God's love of the creature accepted for salvation. He must see in the creature the form of justice

⁸⁵⁰ Rega Wood, *Ockham's Repudiation of Pelagianism*, Cambridge Companion to Ockham, 1999, ch. 15, 350-373.

⁸⁵¹ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d. 17, q. 1, (*Theol.* III, 444): *..illa forma, qua ex natura rei redditur anima Deo grata, non profluit ex divina acceptatione in anima. Probatur, quia illud quo divina acceptatio et dilectio applicatur ad animam, et cuius participatio est ratio formalis ut acceptetur, non potest provenire ex Dei dilectione super animam transeunte, quia tunc anima prius esset dilecta – saltem ordine rationis – quam talis forma esset in ea.*

⁸⁵² Wood, *Repudiation*, 355.

before accepting the creature for salvation. Therefore of necessity the form must be infused first. “Contrary to Scotus...if acceptance were prior, the love would be unreasonable for want of the immutable object it requires”.⁸⁵³ The immutable divine nature requires an immutable object.

To Aureol’s divine “reasonableness”, Ockham opposes divine liberality and generosity: if God loved us only from necessity, his love would not be generous. That God is not necessitated by anything outside Himself was, in fact, an almost unanimous view among medieval scholars, though, as Wood observes, it was “seldom stressed as much as by Ockham”.⁸⁵⁴

The other aspect of Ockham’s twofold understanding of grace, divine free and gracious acceptance of a soul, which he regards as primary, also comes into play in his defence regarding Pelagianism. This grace, ‘*gratia gratuita*’, by which someone is held dear (*carus*) and acceptable for eternal life, is both logically sufficient and logically necessary. Thus he concludes his foray against Aureol with the following statement, in which he also brings his semantic armoury of absolute and connotative terms⁸⁵⁵ to bear in support of his distinction between two understandings of grace:

I say that, taking ‘charity’ for some absolute charity formally inhering, and ‘dear’ for all those for whom eternal life is prepared, in this way, by the absolute power of God someone can be dear to God without charity. Whence ‘charity’ is understood in two ways. In one way precisely for some absolute habit infused, and in this way it is not a connotative name. In another way understanding ‘charity’ as abstracted with respect to the concrete term ‘dear’, connoting someone to whom the person is dear.

⁸⁵³ Wood, *Repudiation*, 356.

⁸⁵⁴ Wood, *Repudiation*, 356.

⁸⁵⁵ Absolute and connotative terms, see p.247 below.

Without charity someone can in the first way be dear [to God], but not without charity in the second way mentioned.⁸⁵⁶

Adams asks how fair-minded Ockham's opponents were, and whether they "simply conflate Ockham's claims regarding God's absolute and ordered power respectively?".⁸⁵⁷ "Not entirely" is her answer, and she gives an account of some of both Lutterell's and Chatton's arguments asserting "that Ockham's position is inconsistent, threatens divine justice, and/or leads to Pelagian heresy".⁸⁵⁸ Chatton, for example, seeks to nullify Ockham's distinction between divine absolute and ordained power by claiming that if something (or someone) is meritorious or worthy of divine acceptance because of created grace inhering, then created grace is necessarily laudable of itself. Besides this, if divine free acceptance is the decisive factor, then, as Adams observes, Chatton might have added that if God can accept an act by purely natural powers (as Ockham claims), "then some naturally produced features would be laudable of themselves – which is the position of Pelagius".⁸⁵⁹ Ockham's response to the argument is contained in his refutation of Aureol in *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.1. He does not deny that created grace is laudable of itself, but does deny that this necessitates God. Here his "metaphysics of separation" comes to his aid. What God can separate temporally, He can separate eternally – and absolutes are eternally separable:

⁸⁵⁶ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.1, (*Theol.* III, 466): ..dico quod accipiendo 'caritas' pro aliqua caritate absoluta formaliter inhaerente, et 'carum' pro omni illo cui praeparatur vita aeterna, sic de potentia Dei absoluta potest aliquis esse carus Deo sine caritate. Unde 'caritas' dupliciter accipitur. Uno modo praecise pro quodam habitu absoluto infuso, et sic non est nomen connotativum. Aliter accipitur 'caritas' ut est abstractum respectu istius concreti 'carum', connotando aliquem cui ille est carus. Sine caritate primo modo potest aliquis de potentia Dei absoluta esse carus, non sine caritate secundo modo dicta.

⁸⁵⁷ Adams, *Ockham*, Vol.2, 1280.

⁸⁵⁸ Adams, *Ockham*, Vol.2, 1280.

⁸⁵⁹ Adams, *Ockham*, Vol.2, 1286.

Because whenever some absolute quality stands temporally in some subject with the lack of some other absolute thing, it can by divine absolute power stand with the lack of that thing in perpetuity; but temporally this form stands with the lack of the beatific act; therefore by God's absolute power He can conserve that form perpetually without the beatific act. But whatever God can do, He can dispose and ordain. Therefore God can ordain that this person have such a form yet never have eternal life, and consequently such a person would not be dear and accepted by God...⁸⁶⁰

Likewise Ockham's "divine annihilation" principle is brought to bear:

Besides, whatever form is posited in the soul, God can will to annihilate the soul before giving it eternal life, and can will never to create it, therefore He is able not to accept such a soul. The assumption is clear, because whatever God contingently creates, He can contingently annihilate it whenever He pleases...⁸⁶¹

The whole purpose of such statements, as Rega Wood points out, is not to make out that "God is free from what he *in fact* ordains; it is rather that God *freely ordains* the laws he establishes".⁸⁶²

Conclusion to Chapter 3

In this chapter, we have seen clearly the extent to which the issue of divine freedom and gratuity preoccupied Ockham, and coloured his account of the relationship between human nature and grace. Concern for divine gratuity has, in fact, been a perennial issue in Catholic theology throughout the centuries covered by de Lubac in his history of nature-grace dualism.⁸⁶³ What, if anything, that may owe to Ockham is beyond the scope of this thesis, but the concern for

⁸⁶⁰ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.1, (*Theol.* III, 453): *Quia quandocumque aliqua qualitas absoluta stat per tempus in aliquo subiecto cum carentia alterius rei absolutae, potest per divinam potentiam absolutam stare in perpetuum cum carentia eiusdem; sed per tempus stat ista forma cum carentia actus beatifici; ergo de potentia Dei absoluta posset Deus in perpetuum conservare istam formam sine actu beatifico. Sed quidquid potest Deus facere, potest disponere et ordinare. Igitur potest Deus ordinare quod iste habeat talem formam et tamen quod numquam habeat vitam aeternam, et per consequens talis non esset carus et acceptus Deo..*

⁸⁶¹ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.17, q.1, (*Theol.* III, 453-4): *Praeterea, quaecumque forma posita in anima, potest Deus velle animam adnihilare antequam det sibi vitam aeternam, et velle numquam eam creare, ergo potest talem animam non acceptare. Assumptum patet, quia quidquid Deus contingenter creat, potest contingenter illud adnihilare quandocumque placet sibi...*

⁸⁶² Rega Wood, *Repudiation*, 356.

⁸⁶³ De Lubac, *Surnaturel*.

divine gratuity is clearly a legitimate one. In this sense, Ockham is a passionate adherent of the post-1277 anti-necessitarian agenda.

The issue of divine illumination is clearly key to what befell the understanding of grace from Thomas to Ockham. While some scholars regard Thomas as having pioneered the banishment of divine illumination from the purely natural realm (p.190 above), Thomas can still say this concerning matters related to man's connatural (this-worldly) end alone:

Accordingly, in matters subject to human reason, and directed to man's connatural end, man can work through the judgment of his reason. If, however, even in these things man receive help in the shape of special promptings (*per specialem instinctum*) from God, this will be out of God's superabundant goodness...⁸⁶⁴

This form of divine gratuity is rendered problematic by Scotus's account of illumination, confining it to matters concerned with the supernatural end alone. While Scotus "closed the door", so to speak, on divine illumination at the purely natural level, he retained, from Thomas, the Aristotelian 'agent intellect', which abstracts universal notions from sense objects via phantasms at the natural level, and mediates them as illumination from angels at the supernatural level (p.152 above). Ockham dismisses this too,⁸⁶⁵ thus eliminating the last natural and metaphysical channel of supernatural 'light' to the purely natural. A question that arises is whether the agent intellect's association with universals was a factor in Ockham's dismissal; the question seems important because, in its role as mediator of grace to the intellect, the agent intellect is concerned with the universals of truth and goodness, which participate in the 'real universals' of divine being, truth and goodness as their supernatural source.

⁸⁶⁴ Aquinas, *ST.I-II.68.2c*, (*Leo.VI,449*), my parenthesis.

⁸⁶⁵ Ockham, *Sent.II,q.13*, (*Theol.V,304-5*).

In the next chapter, we will look more closely at the impact of Ockham's talents as a logician on his account of human nature, and at the way this affects his account of the *imago Dei* in man.

Chapter Four

The Category of 'Relation' and the *Imago Dei*

Introduction

It is now possible to see that the major influence on Ockham's understanding of human nature is constituted not so much by his "nominalism" as by his single-minded concern for human and divine freedom of indifference, and for divine gratuity. In this respect, Ockham is still, 40 or more years after the event, a major exponent of the 'anti-necessitarian' agenda resulting from the Paris condemnations of 1277. His "nominalism" has served him, in the first place, as a tool for eliminating what he interprets as obstacles to divine and human freedom, wherever he finds them. Of the forms taken by this "tool", he uses the divine annihilation or separation principle far more often than the 'razor' as such. Both are utilised to sever connections which look to Ockham like obstacles to divine freedom of action, and occasionally its human counterpart (see conclusion to chapter 2 above, p.141). In this chapter, after taking stock of Ockham's use of logic and semantics in his description of the soul, we will see how his "nominalism" affects his accounts of the closely connected issues of relation and the image of God in the soul.

Ockham: The Powers of the Human Soul

An obvious exception to what I have described as Ockham's "metaphysics of separation and isolation" is his account of the soul and its faculties. Here he uses his theory of absolute and connotative terms not to separate, but to unify, and in fact to identify or 'singularise', the soul together with its faculties.

Following Scotus, he rejects any real distinction between the soul's faculties, but, contrary to Scotus, rejects even his 'formal distinction' between them. The

distinction is in the names or concepts used to describe the different actions of the soul, and in the acts themselves:

Therefore I say... that the powers of the soul of which we are speaking in the proposition, namely the intellect and will... are the same in reality among themselves and as the essence of the soul. But I distinguish concerning the power of the soul: for the power is understood in one way as the total nominal (*exprimente quid nominis*) description of something, in another way is understood as that which is denominated by that name or concept. In the first way of speaking of intellect and will, I say that they are distinguished, for a nominal description of the intellect is that 'intellect is the substance of the soul as able to understand'. A nominal description of the will is that it is 'the substance of the soul as able to will'. Now however these descriptions can be understood as meaning 1) words (*voces*) or 2) concepts or 3) things. In the first way 1) they are really distinguished as words are really distinguished. In the second way 2) they are distinguished in reason as concepts. In the third way 3) they are distinguished in reality, though partially, because, although the substance which can understand and will is one in number, yet understanding and willing are really distinct acts.⁸⁶⁶

Ockham expresses agreement in this with Henry of Ghent,⁸⁶⁷ who distinguishes the powers of the soul by relations, understanding by 'power' "the whole thing named, which is not only the essence of the soul, but understanding and willing". But understanding 'power' in the second way of speaking referred to above, as "that which is denominated by the name or concept", i.e. in the sense of a real (*quid rei*), rather than a nominal, definition, is a different matter, because:

then intellect is no more distinguished from will than from intellect, or God from God, or Socrates from Socrates, because it is not distinguished from will either in reality or in reason. Thus there is one substance of the soul able to perform distinct acts, with respect to which it can have different

⁸⁶⁶ Ockham, *Sent.* II, q. 20, (*Theol.* V, 435): *Ideo dico... quod potentiae animae, de quibus loquimur in proposito, scilicet intellectus et voluntas... sunt idem realiter inter se et cum essentia animae. Sed distinguo de potentia animae: nam potentia uno modo accipitur pro tota descriptione exprimente quid nominis, alio modo accipitur pro illo quod denominator ab illo nomine vel conceptu. Primo modo loquendo de intellectu et voluntate, dico quod distinguuntur, nam descriptio exprimens quid nominis intellectus est ista quod 'intellectus est substantia animae potens intelligere'. Descriptio voluntatis est quod est 'substantia animae potens velle'. Nunc autem istae descriptiones possunt accipi pro vocibus vel conceptibus vel pro rebus. Primo modo distinguuntur realiter sicut voces distinguuntur realiter. Secundo modo distinguuntur ratione sicut conceptus. Tertio modo distinguuntur realiter, saltem partialiter, quia licet eadem sit substantia numero quae potest intelligere et velle, tamen intelligere et velle sunt actus distincti realiter.*

⁸⁶⁷ Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibet*, III, q. 14, (ed. Paris, 1588, ff. 66v-71r)

denominations. Because as the intellect is said to elicit or to be able to elicit the act of understanding; so the will the act of willing.⁸⁶⁸

Therefore, the faculties of the soul are distinguished only as words signifying the soul itself, and connoting different acts performed by the soul. Ockham justifies this by drawing a parallel with the same powers in the divinity, thus begging the question of the *imago Dei* in the human soul:

This is clear *in divinis*, because God has the power of governing, of restoring, of predestining, of reproving, which do not imply any distinction in God, but different effects follow on God's power as creating, governing, predestining, and, on account of different effects, God is variously denominated, and that by an extrinsic denomination.⁸⁶⁹

Ockham here seems to be on course for a Sabellian or Modalist (i.e. unitarian) image of God in the soul. This is the account which sees God as a monad, sometimes identified with the Father, who is merely ascribed different names (or concepts) according to his various activities as incarnate Word or as Holy Spirit. By giving us to understand that a 'power' merely signifies the essence of the soul, while connoting an action, Ockham's account of the soul's powers seems tailor-made for such a heterodox *imago*. Whether and how he avoids this remains to be seen.

Ockham: First and Second Intentions: Absolute and Connotative Terms

The issue as to whether relation should be held to be *secundum esse*, a real thing outside the soul and distinct from absolute things, or only *secundum dici*, a concept in the mind, was clearly a sensitive one. However, Ockham,

⁸⁶⁸ Ockham, *Sent.* II, q. 20, (*Theol.* V, 436): *sic intellectus non plus distinguitur a voluntate quam ab intellectu vel quam Deus a Deo vel Sortes a Sorte, quia nec distinguitur a voluntate nec re nec ratione. Sed sic est una substantia animae potens habere distinctos actus, respectu quorum potest habere diversas denominationes. Quia ut elicit vel elicere potest actum intelligendi dicitur intellectus; ut actum volendi voluntas.*

⁸⁶⁹ Ockham, *Sent.* II, q. 20, (*Theol.* V, 436): *Illud patet in divinis, nam Deus habet potentiam gubernativam, reparativam, praedestinativam, reprobativam, quae nullam distinctionem ponunt in Deo, sed quia alius effectus consequitur potentiam Dei creativam, gubernativam, praedestinativam, et propter diversos effectus denominatur Deus diversis denominationibus, et hoc denominatione extrinseca.*

characteristically, keeps the logical and theological aspects firmly apart, by means of the semantic distinction between terms of 'first and second intention':

Still, according to the truth of theology, 'relation' is a name of first intention, since it signifies not only relative names, but real relations outside the soul, viz., the divine relations. And thus it is truly a first intention.⁸⁷⁰

"An intention of the soul", Ockham says, "is something in the soul capable of signifying something else".⁸⁷¹ A name of first intention, in the strict sense, signifies in such a way that it is able to supposit in a proposition for its *significata*. This comprises names such as 'man', 'tree', 'stone', which are also 'absolute' names. In a broad sense, they include anything which is not itself an intention of the soul, namely syncategorematic⁸⁷² terms and expressions, verbs, conjunctions and similar terms. A name of second intention, on the other hand, "is a sign of first intentions. Examples are 'genus', 'species' and the like".⁸⁷³

Absolute things are those signified by absolute names or terms. "Everything signified by an absolute name is signified primarily...it does not signify one thing primarily and another thing secondarily".⁸⁷⁴ Examples are 'animal', 'man', 'tree' etc. Connotative terms, on the other hand, signify one thing directly or primarily and *in recto* (i.e. in the nominative case), and another indirectly or secondarily and *in obliquo* (i.e. in an oblique case). An example is 'father', which signifies e.g. 'man' directly, and 'child' or 'offspring' indirectly, i.e. 'a man with a child'.

Absolute terms have 'real' definitions; connotative terms only 'nominal' definitions. Ockham classes all relative terms as second intentions, with the one exception, quoted above, of Trinitarian relations which he is obliged, "according

⁸⁷⁰ Ockham, *Quodlibet* VI,27 (*Theol.* IX,689), Freddoso,579.

⁸⁷¹ Ockham, *SL*.I.12,(*Philos.* I,41), Loux,73.

⁸⁷² Syncategorematic terms are indeterminate, e.g. 'every', 'all', 'some', 'except' etc.

⁸⁷³ Ockham, *SL*.I.12,(*Philos.* I,43), Loux,74.

⁸⁷⁴ Ockham, *SL*.I.10,(*Philos.* I,35) Loux,70.

to the truth of theology”, to accept as first intentions, the intra-divine relations being real and formally distinct. All relative terms, in fact, are connotative. We will first take a look at the treatment of ‘relation’ in Thomas, Bonaventure and Scotus.

Aquinas: Relations in Creatures and in God

The quantity of literature on the subject of relation in the period from c.1250 to 1350 is not great. I have found helpful Mark Henninger⁸⁷⁵ and Beatrice Beretta,⁸⁷⁶ the latter, according to Gilles Emery,⁸⁷⁷ being the first doctoral dissertation on the subject of relation in Ockham. However, the author confines her investigation to the philosophical sphere, and, although she refers to the doctrine of the Trinity in analysing texts, Emery notes that she “methodically excludes it in her *‘propos de cette étude’*”.

For Thomas, the category of ‘relation’ is the metaphysical *locus* of the creature’s participation in the divine goodness. Just as the being of creatures is *esse participatum*, so with the transcendental attributes of being, *unum*, *bonum*, and *verum*. The good of creatures is a participation in the divine goodness:

Furthermore, what is said essentially is said more truly than what is said by participation. But God is good essentially, while other things are goods by participation. God is therefore the highest good.⁸⁷⁸

Consequently, “The supreme good does not add to good any absolute thing, but only a relation”.⁸⁷⁹ Relation is unique among the nine Aristotelian accidental

⁸⁷⁵ Mark G. Henninger, SJ, *Relations: Medieval Theories, 1250-1325*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1989.

⁸⁷⁶ Beatrice Beretta, *Ad Aliquid: La relation chez Guillaume d’Occam*, Fribourg Suisse, Éditions Universitaires, 1999 (Doctoral dissertation).

⁸⁷⁷ Review in *Revue Thomiste*, 100, no. 1, 2000, 136-138.

⁸⁷⁸ Aquinas, SCG.I.41.3, (Leo.XIII, 117), N.Dame, Vol. 1, Pegis, 157.

⁸⁷⁹ Aquinas
, ST.Ia.6.2.ad.1, (Leo.IV, 67).

categories in having a different kind of being, such that it does not adhere in any subject:

...quantity and quality are accidents residing in a subject, whereas relation, as Boethius says,⁸⁸⁰ signifies something not as adhering to a subject but as passing from it to something else..⁸⁸¹

In addition, although, as we shall see, it is possible to posit such a thing as a “real relation”, relation is not a reality in the same mode as the other categories:

All genera as such, with the exception of relation, posit something in reality. For example, quantity, by its very nature posits something. But relation, alone, because of what it is, does not posit anything in reality, for what it predicates is not ‘something’ but ‘to something’ (*non aliquid, sed ad aliquid*). Hence, there are certain relations which posit nothing in reality, but only in reason.⁸⁸²

Similarly, in a question concerning the relationship between being and its transcendental attributes, one, true and good, Thomas asks whether good adds anything to being:

Good must...either add nothing to being or add something merely in concept. ...it is not nonsense to call a being good. Thus good, by the fact of its not limiting being, must add to it something merely conceptual... But *true* and *good*, being predicated positively, cannot add anything except a relation which is merely conceptual. A relation is merely conceptual, according to the Philosopher,⁸⁸³ when by it something is said to be related which is not dependent on that to which it is referred, but vice-versa; for a relation is a sort of dependence.⁸⁸⁴

Dependency in a relation need not be reciprocal. This is the case with knowledge, which is dependent on its object, but not vice-versa. In the same way, reality in a relation coincides with the reality of dependence, as is the case between creatures and God. However, the relation is not mutual:

Now a relation of God to creatures is not a reality in God, but in the creature; for it is in God in our idea only: as what is knowable is so called with relation to knowledge, not that it depends on knowledge, but because knowledge depends on it.⁸⁸⁵

⁸⁸⁰ Boethius, *De Trinitate*, V, Loeb, 1962, Stewart, 25/27.

⁸⁸¹ Aquinas, *De Potentia*, VII.8c, Dominican, 1934 trans., Vol. III, 47.

⁸⁸² Aquinas, *De Veritate*, I.5.ad.16, (*Leo*.XXII, Vol. 1, 21), Hackett, Vol. I, Mulligan, 28.

⁸⁸³ Aristotle, *Metaph.* V.15 1021a 27.

⁸⁸⁴ Aquinas, *De Veritate*, XXI.1c, (*Leo*.XXII, Vol. 3, 593), Hackett, Vol. III, Schmidt, 6.

⁸⁸⁵ Aquinas, *ST*.Ia.6.2.ad.1, (*Leo*.IV, 67).

An example of a real non-mutual relation of dependency is the relationship in which creatures are ordered to God, and not vice-versa:

Since therefore God is outside the whole order of creation, and all creatures are ordered to Him, and not conversely, it is manifest that creatures are really related to God Himself; whereas in God there is no real relation to creatures, but a relation only in idea, inasmuch as creatures are referred to Him. Thus there is nothing to prevent these names [e.g., 'Lord' and 'Creator'] which import relation to the creature from being predicated of God temporally, not by reason of any change in Him, but by reason of the change of the creature; as a column is on the right of an animal, without change in itself, but by change in the animal.⁸⁸⁶

How can any sort of relation *ad extra*, even in the mind, be legitimately attributed to God in view of His immutability and simplicity? Thomas shows that relation as such, and indeed action as such, imply neither composition between their terms or extremes, nor movement on the part of the relation itself, or the action itself, "Hence it is not incompatible with a thing's simplicity to have many relations towards other things".⁸⁸⁷ This applies also to the relations *ad extra*, albeit only conceptual, between Creator and creatures:

Now we must needs admit a relation between a principle and the things which proceed from it; and not only a relation of origin inasmuch as a result springs from its source, but also a relation of distinction, seeing that an effect must needs be distinct from its cause. Accordingly from God's supreme simplicity there results an infinite number of respects or relations between creatures and him, inasmuch as he produced creatures distinct from himself and yet somewhat likened to him.⁸⁸⁸

Real relation in creatures is an aspect of finality, as it pertains to the natural order:

...relation in its own proper meaning signifies only what refers to another. Such regard to another exists sometimes in the nature of things, as in those very things which by their own nature are ordered to each other, and have a mutual inclination; and such relations are necessarily real relations; as in a heavy body is found an inclination and order to the centre...a certain respect in regard to the centre, and the same applies to other things. Sometimes, however, this regard to another, signified by relation, is to be found only in the apprehension of reason comparing one thing to another,

⁸⁸⁶ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.13.7c*, (Leo.IV, 153), my parenthesis.

⁸⁸⁷ Aquinas, *De Potentia*, VII.8c, Dominican, 1934, trans., Vol.III, 48.

⁸⁸⁸ Aquinas, *De Potentia*, VII.8c, Dominican, 1934, trans., Vol.III, 48.

and this is a logical relation only; as, for instance, when reason compares man to animal as the species to the genus.⁸⁸⁹

Logical relations have to do, in one way or another, with the mind's engagement with extramental reality:

...just as a real relation consists in order between thing and thing, so a logical relation is the order of thought to thought; and this may occur...when the order is discovered by the mind and attributed to that which is expressed in a relative term. Such are the relations attributed by the mind to the things understood as such, for instance, the relations of genus and species.⁸⁹⁰

Whereas real relations to God in creatures result from their being ordered to God, this is not, as we have seen, the case conversely. Thomas also enunciates the contrast between the divine relations *ad extra* and *ad intra*, as follows:

...nor does any relation to the creature arise from His (God's) nature; for He does not produce the creature by necessity of His nature, but by His intellect and will... Therefore, there is no real relation in God to the creature; whereas in creatures there is a real relation to God, because creatures are contained under the divine order, and their very nature entails dependence on God. On the other hand, the divine processions are in one and the same nature. Hence no parallel exists.⁸⁹¹

In the body of the same question, he further explains that

...when something proceeds from a principle of the same nature, then both the one proceeding and the source of procession agree in the same order; and then they have real relations to each other. Therefore, the divine processions...are necessarily real relations.

Here again, the divine simplicity might be thought to rule out the presence of real relations in God, and indeed, "...relation really existing in God has the existence of the divine essence in no way distinct therefrom", and "nothing that exists in God can have any relation to that wherein it exists or of whom it is spoken, except the relation of identity; and this by reason of God's supreme simplicity".⁸⁹² Reality in the divine relations differs from the essence only in what

⁸⁸⁹ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.28.1c*, (*Leo.IV*,318).

⁸⁹⁰ Aquinas, *De Potentia*, VII.11c, Dominican, 1934, trans., Vol.III, 63.

⁸⁹¹ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.28.1.ad.3*, (*Leo.IV*,319).

⁸⁹² Aquinas, *ST.Ia.28.2c* and *ad.1*, (*Leo.IV*,321).

is meant by 'opposition to a term', i.e. to what terminates the relation regarding intelligibility:

But in so far as relation implies respect to something else, no respect to the essence is signified, but rather to its opposite term. Thus it is manifest that relation really existing in God is really the same as His essence; and only differs in its mode of intelligibility; as in relation is meant that regard to its opposite which is not expressed in the name of essence.⁸⁹³

Scotus: Relations in Creatures and in God

Scotus is a realist regarding relations. They are accidents characterizing individual subjects, and in some cases are really distinct from their subjects and from other relations,

For a relation is neither a substance nor an absolute... Here then the question is whether it has existence or [and] is a thing having a real entity of its own outside the soul... To this I answer, it is a thing... A relationship is real if, given real terms that are really distinct, it is there by the very nature of things. For its entity, whatever it be, is not just in the soul, and consequently it is a thing in its own way and in accord with its own entity. But the relation of Father to Son is this sort of thing".⁸⁹⁴

In his commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, he argues that in general a relation is not the same as its foundation.⁸⁹⁵ For instance, the respective heights of Socrates and Plato are really distinct from the subjects in which they inhere, since Socrates or Plato could grow or shrink in height but remain in existence; similarly, the height of either could change with respect to the other.⁸⁹⁶ In the case of Socrates's relation of height with respect to Plato, Socrates's height is called the foundation of the relation, and Plato's height the terminus, being what Socrates's relation of height is "toward". However, the relation itself inheres in Socrates, not in Socrates's height, as accidents do not inhere in accidents. Thus Socrates is the subject of the relation. In addition, a

⁸⁹³ Aquinas, *ST. Ia.28.2c*, (Leo. IV, 321).

⁸⁹⁴ Scotus, *Quodlibet*, III.15-16, (Olms-Wadding XII, 68); Alluntis, 63.

⁸⁹⁵ Scotus, *In Metaph.* V, q. 11. n. 50, (Olms-Wadding, IV, 635).

⁸⁹⁶ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, II, d. 1, q. 5, nn. 200-204, (Vat. VII, pp. 101-3).

relation can have its terminus in something absolute.⁸⁹⁷ A co-relation is identified by transposing the foundation and the terminus.

Major differences in Scotus from Aquinas' account of relation centre on the question of real as opposed to rational or conceptual relations. Like Thomas he rejects the view that all relations are merely "of reason" and mind-dependent. However, he regards as sufficient to constitute a real relation the real extra-mental existence of its foundation and its terminus.⁸⁹⁸ He also considers that the category of relation ought not to be divided into the real and the merely conceptual. As noted by P.King⁸⁹⁹, he comments "tartly" that "Rose is not divided into real roses and merely conceptual roses, for they are two modes of being of the same thing".⁹⁰⁰ Scotus's argument rests on the contention that an object as considered by the intellect has a special ontological status, a lesser kind of being, *esse diminutum*.⁹⁰¹ In place of the "real as opposed to conceptual" scheme, he adopts, though with some qualifications, Aristotle's 3 modes of relations⁹⁰²: 1) numerical relations founded on quantity; 2) active/passive relations, founded on one of the absolute categories; 3) relations of "the measurable to the measure", as knowledge to the knowable, for instance, which may be founded on any category. These three are called first-, second- and third-mode relations respectively. Third-mode relations⁹⁰³, which figure prominently in Scotus's metaphysics, are characterised by the absence of

⁸⁹⁷ Scotus, *In Metaph.* V, q. 11, n. 66, (Olms-Wadding, IV, 636).

⁸⁹⁸ Scotus, *Quodlibet*, q. VI. 33, (Olms-Wadding, XII. 166), Alluntis, 156-7, 6. 82.

⁸⁹⁹ Peter King, Chapter 1, "Scotus on Metaphysics", *Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, Thomas Williams, ed., 15-68, 36.

⁹⁰⁰ Scotus, *In Metaph.* V, q. 11, n. 42, (Olms-Wadding, IV, 634).

⁹⁰¹ Scotus, *In Metaph.* V, q. 11, n. 44, (Olms-Wadding, IV, 634).

⁹⁰² Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, V. 15, (1020b26-32); Scotus, *In Metaph.* V. qq. 12-13, (Olms-Wadding, IV, 643-7).

⁹⁰³ Based on *Metaphysics*, V. 15, (1021a26-1021b4).

a real co-relation: for instance something can be knowable without actually being known; there is dependency or “towardness” in one direction only.

The ‘nonmutual’ relation of creatures to the Creator as held by Thomas and others can be recognised here as a third-mode relation. Scotus, however, does not accept the “nonmutuality” thesis; he considers it an invalid association or conflation of mutuality with dependence. He first points out that, besides the ‘existential’ type of dependence (knowledge cannot exist without the knowable) which usually characterizes the traditional account, there is a dependence of perfection between the measurable and the measure: knowledge must “measure up” to the knowable, in terms of accuracy for instance. As far as mutuality is concerned, he insists that third-mode relations *are* mutual, even where genuine dependency is involved in one foundation. The difference is rather in the relations of act to potency in the respective *relata*. The relevant co-relation (or correlative) must be present to denominate the independent element. The knowable is only knowable *qua* the potential relation it may stand in to a knower. Nor does mutuality entail mutual *dependence*.⁹⁰⁴

Scotus does not consider the direction of dependence of a third-mode relation to be affected by the presence of a co-relation. A relation may be terminated at something absolute, which means that a third-mode co-relation may have an absolute being as both its subject and foundation—since the foundation need not be distinct from the relation or co-relation. In these circumstances, the destruction of the co-relation (by change in, or removal of, its terminus) does not produce any change in its foundation, the original relation’s terminus. This is the

⁹⁰⁴ Scotus, *In Metaph.* V.12-14, nn.100-104, (Olms-Wadding, IV, 643-648)

account Scotus gives of the relation between God the Creator and creatures.⁹⁰⁵ All this points to the fact that, under these conditions, a third-mode co-relation is nothing more than an extrinsic denomination of its subject: God is not necessarily (or essentially) a Creator, although creatures are necessarily creatures. Scotus can therefore deny that the co-relation of a real third-mode relation is necessarily a relation “of reason” only. Scotus’s analysis of third-mode relations is applied at many points in his philosophy, especially in his definitions of intuitive and abstractive cognition⁹⁰⁶ and in his analysis of the relation between cause and effect as a form of dependence.

Concerning Trinitarian relations, two passages from Augustine on the constitution of the divine Persons are referred to by Scotus in *Quodlibet*, qq.III and IV, one to the effect that “not everything in God is predicated by way of substance or accident”, especially with regard to “relational assertions”,⁹⁰⁷ and the other that

Everything in the divine is predicated according to either substance or relation, and what is predicated according to substance is common [to all three Persons]. Therefore, origin, be it active or passive, is formally a relation.⁹⁰⁸

In the Trinity, the Father is the active origin of the Son, and Father and Son together the active origin of the Holy Spirit. The respective co-relations are the ‘passive relations of origin’ in which receptivity is enshrined at the heart of Being (p.23 above).

⁹⁰⁵ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, II, d.1, q.5, nn.261-2, (Vat.VII, 129).

⁹⁰⁶ Scotus, *Quodlibet*, XIII, nn.34-37, (Olms-Wadding, XII, 311-12).

⁹⁰⁷ Augustine, *De Trin.* V, c.6, n.6, (PL.42.914); Scotus, *Quodlibet*, q.III.18, (Olms-Wadding, XII, 83), Alluntis, 76, 3.51.

⁹⁰⁸ Augustine, *De Trin.* V, c.5, n.5, (PL.ptbi); Scotus, *Quodlibet*, q.IV.32, (Olms-Wadding, XII, 115), Alluntis, 106, 4.68.

OCKHAM ON RELATION

The category of 'relation' plays a major role in Ockham's programme of ontological parsimony (also called 'ontological reduction'). This programme is summarized by Adams as follows: "to eliminate universals other than names or concepts and to restrict particular things (*res*) to the categories of substance and quality".⁹⁰⁹ All of Aristotle's ten categories or 'most general genera' (*genera generalissima*) are relational terms in one sense or another. The importance of the concept of relation for Ockham can be gauged from the number of questions dealing directly with it in the *Quodlibets* (VI, 8-30, mostly associated with the categories), the *Summa Logicae* (I, qq.49-54), the *Ordinatio* (d.30, qq.1-5) and the *Exposition on the Categories of Aristotle* (*Expos. Praed.*), chapters 12 and 13: and all this does not include his treatment of relations in the Trinity, or the many other locations where the concept necessarily figures.

Ockham: Real Relations

In his 'Exposition on the *Categories* of Aristotle' (*E.Praed.*), chapter 12, Ockham introduces the Aristotelian term, '*ad aliquid*' (from Aristotle, *ὀν πρὸς τι*⁹¹⁰), literally 'towards something' or 'in relation to' another thing, to describe the category of relation,⁹¹¹ which is used also to describe what is 'of' (or 'than' or 'as' etc) another thing. Ockham is always careful to lay claim to the support of Aristotle in setting out his position on the ontology of relations, in accordance with his own interpretation of the ontology of the categories⁹¹² in general:

⁹⁰⁹ Marilyn McCord Adams, *Things versus 'Hows', or Ockham on Predication and Ontology*, in James Bogen and James E. McGuire (edd.), *How Things Are*, Dordrecht/Boston, 1984, 175-188, 175.

⁹¹⁰ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* V, ch.15, (1020b26).

⁹¹¹ Aristotle, *Categories* VII, (6a36-6b14).

⁹¹² i.e. that only substance and quality are categories of the real; the other eight are only names or signs.

Many things.. can be adduced, and have elsewhere⁹¹³ been adduced, to show that in the intention of the Philosopher a relation is not a thing distinct from any absolute thing; but they are only relative names, which cannot be appropriate to something except in respect to something else, or at least it is necessary to add or understand some name in either the genitive, dative or ablative case.⁹¹⁴

The three oblique cases mentioned, in fact, accord only with names and signs, therefore only names and signs are said to be *ad aliquid*.⁹¹⁵ This applies even where the object signified by the relative term is a substance or a quality, and thus in Ockham's view a real, extra-mental thing. Thus the name 'father' is just as much a relative term as, for instance, 'double' or 'similar' or 'equal'. However, "It is not thus with the name 'man'; for if Socrates is a man, it is not implied that he is *to* some man or *of* some man".⁹¹⁶ Therefore 'father' is an *ad aliquid* or 'relative' (*relativus*) term, but not a 'relation' (*relatio*) as such. In the following question, he says, "a correct description would be: 'relatives (*relativa*) are those things which of their very selves are *ad aliquid*' ".⁹¹⁷

Aquinas uses the word 'habitude', derived from *se habere ad*, and '*ad aliud*', for the most part, for *ad aliquid*:

Some relative names are imposed to signify the relative habitudes themselves, as *master* and *servant*, *father* and *son*, and the like, and these relatives are called *secundum esse* ('according to being'). But others are imposed to signify the things from which ensue certain habitudes, as the mover and the thing moved, the head and the thing that has a head, and the like: and these relatives are called *secundum dici* ('according to saying').⁹¹⁸

⁹¹³ Cf. *Ordinatio*, d.30, q.3, (*Theol.* IV, 340); *SL*, I, 49, 50, (*Philos.* I, 153-162).

⁹¹⁴ Ockham, *E.Praed.*, ch.12, (*Philos.* II, 242); my translation: *Multa autem possunt adduci, sicut alibi adduxi, ad ostendendum quod de intentione Philosophi est quod relatio non est alia res distincta ab omni re absoluta; sed tantum sunt nomina relativa, quae scilicet alicui non possunt competere nisi respectu alicuius alterius, vel saltem oportet addere vel subintelligere aliquod nomen in aliquo casu, genitivo vel dativo vel ablativo.*

⁹¹⁵ Ockham, *E.Praed.*, ch.12, (*Philos.* II, 240).

⁹¹⁶ Ockham, *E.Praed.*, ch.12, (*Philos.* II, 240).

⁹¹⁷ Ockham, *E.Praed.*, ch.13, (*Philos.* II, 265); my trans.: *ista debet esse descriptio quod 'relativa sunt illa quae hoc ipsum quod sunt, ad aliquid sunt'.*

⁹¹⁸ Aquinas, *ST*. Ia. 13.7. ad.1, (*Leo*. IV, 163).

However, *secundum esse* and *secundum dici* do not correspond to 'real' and 'of reason', as Thomas explains in *De Potentia*:

This distinction between *secundum esse* and *secundum dici* relatives does not prove the relations in question to be real. Certain *secundum esse* relative terms do not signify a real relation, for instance, right and left as ascribed to a pillar: and some *secundum dici* relative terms signify real relations, for instance knowledge and sensation. Because relatives are said to be *secundum esse* when terms are employed to signify the relations themselves, while they are said to be *secundum dici* when the terms are employed to signify qualities or something of the kind primarily, from which relations arise.⁹¹⁹

Ockham objects to the terms *secundum esse* and *secundum dici* as a division of relations, on the grounds that they do not appear in Aristotle.⁹²⁰ For Ockham, *secundum esse*, used to describe a relation, is too liable to serve the notion of a relation as a real, extra-mental thing, distinct from absolute things. In this respect, he makes a distinction in *Quodlibet* VI between two ways in common usage of referring to a relation as 'real':

In one way a relation is called real because it signifies some "little thing" outside the soul that is distinct from absolute things. In a second way, a relation is called real because it signifies absolute things, either outside the soul or in the soul, which are said to be such as they are denominated to be by means of such a relative [name] in the absence of any operation of the intellect.⁹²¹

He rejects any reality for relations in the first sense. Indeed he has already devoted twelve questions of *Quodlibet* VI (8-19) to disproving any reality whatever for such "little things". The deciding factor is the non-necessity of an act of the intellect for bringing about the existence of the relation:

God can in reality create a stone whether there is or is not an intellect understanding it. Therefore this relation can in some way be called real, not that this relation is some thing, but because it signifies (*importat*) true things which do not require an operation of the intellect for one to be creating and another to be created. Just as similarity is called a real relation, not because it is some one thing distinct from others, but because it signifies

⁹¹⁹ Aquinas, *De Potentia*, VII, 10.ad.11, Dominican, 1934 trans., Vol.III, 62.

⁹²⁰ Ockham, *E.Praed.* 13, (*Philos.* II, 266:61-267:66).

⁹²¹ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, VI, q.25, (*Theol.* IX, 679), Freddoso, 571-2.

true things concerning which the intellect does nothing to bring it about that one is similar to the other and conversely.⁹²²

Despite his objection to the term *secundum esse* in the *E.Praed.*, Ockham uses the term himself in *Quodlibet* VI, 21, on the grounds of common usage, in distinguishing between relatives according to being, and according to predication:

I understand this distinction as follows: Relatives according to being are those that are related to one another in such a way that (i) if existence is truly predicated of the one, then it will be truly predicated of the other, and (ii) if the one is truly predicated of something, then the other will be truly predicated of something. For instance, if 'A master exists' is true, then 'A servant exists' is true, and if 'Something is a master' is true, then 'Something is a servant' is true, and vice versa.⁹²³

Although not posited in terms of 'habitude', but rather in terms of predicability, this is virtually identical to Thomas's description of *secundum esse* or 'according to being' relations.⁹²⁴ Thomas's second type, which he calls *secundum dici* or 'according to saying' relations, is described as something "from which a habitude ensues". Ockham's corresponding type, which he calls "relatives according to predication", is such that:

...if existence is truly predicated of the one, it is not necessary that existence be truly predicated of the other or that something be added in an oblique case to [the first]. For instance, if 'Knowledge exists' is true, it is not necessary that 'What is knowable exists' be true, and if 'This is a hand' is true, it is not necessary that it be the hand of some human being, since an amputated hand is truly a hand and yet is not the hand of any human being.⁹²⁵

⁹²² Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.30, q.5, (*Theol.* IV, 385), my trans.: *Immo potest realiter Deus creare lapidem si intellectus non sit sicut si intellectus sit. Ideo potest ista relatio dici aliquo modo realis, non quidem quod ista relatio sit aliqua res, sed quia importat veras res quae non requirunt operationem intellectus ad hoc quod una sit creans et alia sit creata. Sicut similitudo dicitur relatio realis, non quia sit aliqua una res alia ab aliis, sed quia importat veras res circa quas nihil facit intellectus ad hoc quod una sit similis alteri et e converso.*

⁹²³ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, VI, q.21, (*Theol.* IX, 664), Freddoso, 560.

⁹²⁴ See above, p.257-8.

⁹²⁵ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, VI, q.21, (*Theol.* IX, 664), Freddoso, 560.

Ockham: Three 'Types' of Relation

Ockham adopts Aristotle's three-fold division of relations taken from *Metaphysics* V:⁹²⁶ 1) relations according to number and quantity, e.g. equality, similarity, distinctness, identity etc., 2) relations of acting and being acted upon, e.g. heating and being heated, and other relations which 'admit of more and less', and 3) non-quantitative relations of measuring and being measured, e.g. knower and the thing known, image and the thing represented. Each of these types can be classed as a relative 'according to being':

For if something is similar, then it is similar to something white or to something black, and if someone is a father, then he is a father of some child, and if something is knowledge, it is knowledge of something knowable.⁹²⁷

However, this does not qualify them as "real" in the sense of being "distinct from absolute things":

And so Socrates is similar to Plato because of absolute things only, all else excluded – whether in extra-mental reality or in the intellect. And so in extra-mental reality there is nothing besides the absolute things.⁹²⁸

Ockham: Reductive Arguments

Questions 8 to 16 of *Quodlibet* VI are devoted to proving this, and questions 17 to 19 to demonstrating agreement with Aristotle in this regarding all three types.

Ockham brings to bear a range of argument types characteristic of his programme of ontological parsimony:

1) The 'independent conception' argument, that really distinct things can be independently conceived, whereas a relation cannot be conceived independently of its foundation and terminus, i.e. of the related objects. Ockham extends this, perhaps questionably, to relations of cause and effect, including

⁹²⁶ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, V, 15, (1020b26-1021b11).

⁹²⁷ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, VI, q. 21, (*Theol.* IX, 665), Freddoso, 561.

⁹²⁸ Ockham *Ordinatio*, d. 30, q. 1, (*Theol.* IV, 316:14-16), Henninger, 1989 trans., 131.

the relation of creature to Creator, where he claims that “a creature can be conceived perfectly without God’s being conceived”.⁹²⁹ It is difficult to see how any effect can be conceived perfectly *as an effect* without its cause being conceived: and most especially a creature *as a creature*; but this does not really affect the argument.

2) The ‘absurd (sometimes infinite) number’ argument: that if, for instance, God were to produce 1000 worlds, each containing something white, then an agent producing something white in one of them would cause a similarity in 1000 worlds. Not only the number, but the distance between the worlds also contributes to the absurdity for Ockham.⁹³⁰ Another, still more potent, version of this argument points to the universe as containing an infinite number of relations, of spatial distance for instance, which must change every time anything moves.⁹³¹

3) The ‘*potentia absoluta Dei*’ argument crops up in many forms: here, in connection with relations of natural priority and posteriority:

..God can produce any prior absolute thing without producing any posterior thing. Therefore, he can produce two absolute white things without producing any posterior similarity, and yet the two things will nonetheless be similar. Therefore a similarity is not the sort of mediating thing in question.⁹³²

The ‘razor’, which by inference can be applied to all ontologically reductive arguments, is used explicitly here: “Likewise, if the things are similar without a mediating similarity, then it is pointless to posit any mediating similarity”.⁹³³

4) The ‘divisibility/indivisibility’ argument: if a relation, of similarity in whiteness for instance, is a distinct thing, it will be either (a) divisible, in which case it will be a quantum, and therefore extended, or (b) indivisible, in which case,

⁹²⁹ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, VI, q.8, (*Theol.* IX, 613), Freddoso, 514.

⁹³⁰ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, VI, q.8, (*Theol.* IX, 613-4), Freddoso, 514-5.

⁹³¹ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, VII, q.8, (*Theol.* IX, 728), Freddoso, 614.

⁹³² Ockham, *Quodlibet*, VI, q.8, (*Theol.* IX, 614), Freddoso, 515.

⁹³³ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, VI, q.8, (*Theol.* IX, 614), Freddoso, 515.

if, by God's power, one part of the whiteness is annihilated along with its similarity, then what is numerically the same similarity will still remain in the other part – which [like (a)] is absurd.⁹³⁴

5) The 'infinite regress' (sometimes called 'infinite progression') argument: This is based on the idea that if a relation A is distinct from both its foundation B and its terminus C, then there will be similarly distinct relations between A and B, and between A and C, and so on *ad infinitum*. Scotus, whose realist ontology involves relations as being distinct from absolute things, saw this danger and tried to avoid it by positing identity between a relation itself and any relation it might bear to its foundation or terminus, thus stopping the regress at the second stage [ref. required]. Ockham counters this on the grounds that distinct termini entail distinct relations, "since one relation has one primary terminus".⁹³⁵

Ockham: Foundations and Non-Inherence

According to Scotus, relations are really distinct from, but inhere in, their foundations.⁹³⁶ Ockham rejects both the distinction and the inherence, and resolves the issue in terms of his semantics:

..the similarity of one whiteness to another signifies the first whiteness and connotes the other, and although they co-exist, they are said and denominated as similar without any relation. This is because the name or concept 'similarity' signifies the two white things coexisting as a whole significate, and signifies one only as coexisting with the other. Therefore if one whiteness is destroyed the first white thing is not said to be similar, but this only on account of the destruction of the second whiteness which was connoted.⁹³⁷

⁹³⁴ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, VI, q.8, (*Theol.* IX, 616), Freddoso, 516.

⁹³⁵ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, VI, q.11, (*Theol.* IX, 626), Freddoso, 525.

⁹³⁶ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, II, d.1, q.5, n.200, (*Vat.* VII, 101-2); *Lectura*, II, d.1, q.5, n.184, (*Vat.* XVIII, 61).

⁹³⁷ Ockham, *Sent.* II, q.2, (*Theol.* V, 39), my translation: ..*similitudo unius albedinis ad aliam significat primam albedinem et connotat aliam, et quamdiu simul exsistunt, dicuntur et denominantur similia sine aliqua relatione. Et hoc quia hoc nomen vel conceptus 'similitudo' significat ista duo alba quo ad totale significatum coexistentia, et non significat unam nisi coexistat alteri. Et ideo destructa una albedine non dicitur prima albedo similis, sed hoc propter solam destructionem secundae albedinis connotatae. Cf. Ordinatio, d.30, q.3 (Theol. IV, 351-365); Sent. II, q.1, (Theol. V, 8-11); Quodlibet, V, q.25, (Theol. IX, 582-4); Quodlibet, VI, q.16, Theol. IX, 642-3).*

In other words, a relation, such as 'similarity' (as opposed to a relative, such as 'similar') can signify or supposit for more than one thing:

..it is impossible for two white things to exist without a similarity, since 'similarity' supposits for two simple things taken together, just as the name 'number' does. And so even though a whiteness is not *per se* a similarity, nonetheless two whitenesses are a similarity as long as 'similarity' is standing significatively.⁹³⁸

Non-inherence in absolutes implies disqualification for the term 'foundation' as applied to a relation:

Likewise, I claim that a relation does not have a foundation; nor does one find the expression 'foundation of a relation' in Aristotle's philosophy; nor is it a philosophical term.⁹³⁹

What Scotus calls the 'foundation' of a relation becomes for Ockham merely one of the two correlative terms or 'extremes' of the relation; because the relation not only does not inhere in an absolute: it is not identical with one either:

..therefore I do not posit that a relation is the same in reality as a foundation, but I say that a relation either is not a foundation but only an intention and concept in the soul signifying several absolutes, or else it is many absolutes, as a people is many men and no man is a people.⁹⁴⁰

A plurality can be the term of a relation; consequently, as he says elsewhere, it is true to say "Plato and Socrates are a similarity" (both being white), as long as 'similarity' is standing significatively.⁹⁴¹

The terminus of a relation, Ockham says, can be taken in a proper or an improper sense. Properly, it is taken for the correlative of the relation "predicated according to complementarity" and "added to it in an oblique case

⁹³⁸ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, VI, q. 8, (*Theol.* IX, 616-7), Freddoso, 517; cf. *Ordinatio*, d. 30, q. 1, (*Theol.* IV, 314).

⁹³⁹ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, VI, q. 10, (*Theol.* IX, 624), Freddoso, 524.

⁹⁴⁰ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d. 30, q. 1, (*Theol.* IV, 314), my trans.: *...ideo non pono quod relatio est idem realiter cum fundamento, sed dico quod vel relatio non est fundamentum sed tantum intentio et conceptus in anima importans plura absoluta, sicut populus est plures homines et nullus homo est populus.* Cf. *Ordinatio*, d. 30, q. 3 (*Theol.* IV, 355).

⁹⁴¹ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d. 30, q. 1, (*Theol.* IV, 316).

when the relation is truly predicated of something".⁹⁴² He gives it as Aristotle's view that:

In this sense a relation is always terminated in something relative, since a relative is predicated according to complementarity with respect to another relative and not with respect to anything absolute... And therefore I claim that, properly speaking, one relative name is terminated in another relative name – and not in either an absolute name or a thing outside the soul.⁹⁴³

He gives the example of the relative term 'father' having 'son', and not the absolute terms 'man' or 'animal', as its correlative terminus; each correlative being in the definition of the other. In an improper sense, however, an absolute term can be taken as terminus of a relative, provided "its existence is denominated by the terminus, properly speaking, of the relation". The only example he gives is the relative name 'creature', whose proper terminus is 'creator', "yet that which is really a creator is not a relative thing but an absolute thing, viz., God himself".⁹⁴⁴ Thus it is legitimate to speak of a real relation of creatures to God.

Ockham: The Relation of God to Creatures

Ockham disagrees also with Scotus and Thomas concerning reality in relations between God and creatures. Both had posited a real relation of dependence of creatures to God, but, in Thomas's words, God does not create by necessity of his nature, but by his intellect and will:

Therefore there is no real relation in God to the creature; whereas in creatures there is a real relation to God; because... their very nature entails dependence on God.⁹⁴⁵

⁹⁴² Ockham, *Quodlibet*, VI, q. 24, (*Theol.* IX, 673), Freddoso, 567.

⁹⁴³ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, VI, q. 24, (*Theol.* IX, 673-4), Freddoso, 568.

⁹⁴⁴ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, VI, q. 24, (*Theol.* IX, 674), Freddoso, 568.

⁹⁴⁵ Aquinas, *ST*. Ia. 28. 1. ad. 3, (*Leo*. IV, 319); cf. *De Potentia*, VII. 11. ad. 3, Dominican, 1934 trans., Vol. III, 65; SCG., II. 12, (*Leo*. XIII, 290).

Thomas bases his argument on Aristotle's third type of relation, non-quantitative relations of measuring and being measured (above p.260). This type of relation can be non-mutual, as for example that between the knower and the thing known:

..thus knowledge has a relation to the thing known, because the knower by an intelligible act has an order to the thing known which is outside the soul. Whereas the thing itself which is outside the soul is not touched by that act, inasmuch as the act of the intellect does not pass into exterior matter by changing it... For this reason the relation which arises from the act of the mind cannot be in that thing.⁹⁴⁶

Mutuality demands foundations of the same general type, in this case action and passion, which are lacking between the knower and the thing known.

Likewise in the case of God and creatures:

Now God does not work by an intermediary action to be regarded as issuing from God and terminating in the creature: but his action is his substance and is wholly outside the genus of created being whereby the creature is related to him. Nor again does any good accrue to the Creator from the production of the creature... It follows then that there is no real relation in him to creatures, although creatures are really related to him as effects to their cause.⁹⁴⁷

However, while real relations to creatures are inadmissible, Thomas says elsewhere that "there is no reason against our admitting in God many logical relations",⁹⁴⁸ including his relation to creatures, which "in him is merely logical".⁹⁴⁹ Scotus's argument, similarly, is based on the eternal and immutable divine nature:

..relations of creatures to God are new and temporal, but it is not necessary, insofar as they are to God as to a terminus, to posit temporal relations in God terminating them.⁹⁵⁰

⁹⁴⁶ Aquinas, *De Potentia*, VII.10c, Dominican, 1934, trans., Vol.III, 59.

⁹⁴⁷ Aquinas, *De Potentia* VII, 10c, Dominican, 1934, trans., Vol.III, 59-60

⁹⁴⁸ Aquinas, *ST*.Ia.32.2c, (Leo.IV, 352).

⁹⁴⁹ Aquinas, *De Potentia*, VII.11.ad.3, Dominican, 1934, trans., Vol.III, 65.

⁹⁵⁰ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d.30, qq.1-2, n.30, (Vat.VI, 181), my trans.: *...relationes creaturarum ad Deum sunt novae et ex tempore, nec propter illas in quantum sunt ad Deum 'ut ad terminum' necesse est ponere aliquas relationes in Deo ex tempore, terminantes istas.*

He does, however, allow of a relation of reason on the grounds that there can be something new in God “through the act of the created intellect, but not through the act of his [divine] intellect”.⁹⁵¹

Since Ockham rejects the very existence of real foundations in relations, his notion of what constitutes reality in mutual relations is necessarily very different from that of Thomas or Scotus. He devotes a whole question of the *Ordinatio* to positing his own argument explicitly against Scotus.⁹⁵² He begins by enumerating three items that he regards as false: 1) that some relations are mutual and some not, and that this distinguishes [Aristotle’s] third type of relatives (p.260 above) from the first two types; 2) that all relations of God to creatures are relations of reason; 3) that the relation of God to creatures cannot be called real, even in the manner of the sun’s relation to the things it heats on earth.⁹⁵³

1) Ockham rejects the first as non-Aristotelian, citing *Categories* VII,⁹⁵⁴ and asserts that “always and in all relatives there is a mutual relation if it [the relation itself] is appropriately assigned”.⁹⁵⁵ What he means by “appropriately assigned” becomes clear in his (evidently correct) interpretation of a passage from *Metaphysics* V, which Scotus had used⁹⁵⁶ to support his argument:

But what is measurable and knowable and thinkable are said to be relative because in each case something else is referred to them, not because they are referred to something else.⁹⁵⁷

⁹⁵¹ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d.30, qq.1-2, n.43, (Vat.VI,189): *est tamen aliqua nova per actum intellectus creati, nulla autem per actum intellectus sui.*

⁹⁵² Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.30, q.5, (*Theol.*IV,374-395).

⁹⁵³ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.30, q.5, (*Theol.*IV,378).

⁹⁵⁴ Aristotle, *Categories*, VII, (6b28-29).

⁹⁵⁵ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.30, q.5, (*Theol.*IV,388): *dico quod semper in omnibus relativis est mutua relatio si convenienter assignetur.*

⁹⁵⁶ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d.30, qq.1-2, n.31, (Vat.VI,181-182).

⁹⁵⁷ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, V.15, (1021a29-30), Rowan trans.,357.

Ockham will point out that the remainder of the passage shows Aristotle to be concerned with appropriate assignment of relative termini, and not with non-mutuality. Aristotle continues:

For by what is thinkable is meant that of which there may be a thought. However, a thought is not relative to the one whose thought it is, for then the same thing would be expressed twice. And similarly sight is relative to that of which it is the sight and not to the one whose sight it is (although it is true to say this); but it is relative to colour or to something of this sort. But then the same thing would be said twice, that sight is of the one whose sight it is. Things which are said to be relative directly, then, are spoken of in this way.⁹⁵⁸

Obviously, the same can be applied to Thomas's and Scotus's example of the knower and the knowable. It is the knowledge and the knowable that are correctly assigned as directly mutually related, rather than the knower and the knowable, though it seems that the latter two can be indirectly assigned;

For that is truly *ad aliquid* which, when everything else is removed (*circumscriptis*), and itself alone retained, is still *ad aliquid*. But when everything else is removed from something knowable and the knowable retained, it is still knowable by knowledge. Therefore the knowable is properly a relative. Therefore it is not the intention of the Philosopher in *Metaphysics* V that one relative does not correspond to another relative, but it is his intention that in the third type [of relation] there is not, on the part of one [relative], some absolute name besides the relative name with respect to which the other is called a relative, as there is on the part of the other.⁹⁵⁹

2) Secondly, the relation of God to creatures cannot be only a relation of reason, since for God to create depends no more on an act of the (human) intellect than for the sun to illuminate or heat, and for God to be creating depends no more on an act of the intellect than for Socrates or Plato to be white.

⁹⁵⁸ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, V.15, (1021a30-b4), Rowan trans., 357-8.

⁹⁵⁹ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.30, q.5, (*Theol.* IV, 388-389), my trans.: *Quia aliquid est tale, quod omnibus aliis circumscriptis ipso solo retento, adhuc est ad aliquid, tale vere est ad aliquid. Sed circumscripto a scibili omni alio et retento quod sit scibile, vere est scientia scibile. Igitur scibile propriissime est relativum. Et ideo non est intentio Philosophi, V Metaphysicae, quod uni relativorum non correspondeat aliud relativum, sed est intentio sua quod in tertio modo ex una parte non habetur aliquod nomen absolutum praeter nomen relativum respectu cuius dicatur aliud nomen relativum, sicut est ex parte alia.*

3) So, Ockham says, the relation of God to creatures can ‘in some way’ (*aliquo modo*) be called a real relation.⁹⁶⁰ As he says in his brief opening reply to the question: “God is really a creator; therefore he is really referred [to the creature]; therefore the relation of God to a creature is real”.⁹⁶¹ At the end, he concludes with a ‘contradiction argument’: “it is a contradiction that God should be creating (*creans*), unless something other than God is created”.⁹⁶²

Ockham designates this as a real ‘temporal’ relation, obviously to distinguish it from the real eternal relations in the Godhead. However, he does not (at least in this question) explicitly address the issue, which is decisive for Thomas and Scotus, of divine immutability or, as Thomas puts it, of the fact that “his action is his substance and is wholly outside the genus of created being whereby the creature is related to him”,⁹⁶³ so that God cannot be “really related to the creature so that this relation is something in God”.⁹⁶⁴ Presumably, this is the reason for the ‘*aliquo modo*’ with which he qualifies his ‘real relation’ of God to creatures. Nevertheless, a move away from a theological and metaphysical approach to the question in favour of a logical and semantic one is quite perceptible in Ockham.

Ockham: Relations of Reason

Ockham regards the expression ‘relation of reason’ as “not a very philosophical expression” (*non sit vocabulum multum philosophicum*), and does not “remember reading that expression in Aristotle’s philosophy”.⁹⁶⁵ This may be

⁹⁶⁰ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.30, q.5, (*Theol.* IV, 384-385).

⁹⁶¹ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.30, q.5, (*Theol.* IV, 375).

⁹⁶² Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.30, q.5, (*Theol.* IV, 395).

⁹⁶³ Aquinas, *De Potentia*, VII, 10, Dominican, trans., 1934, Vol. III, 60.

⁹⁶⁴ Aquinas, *De Potentia*, VII, 10, Dominican, 1934, trans., Vol. III, 55.

⁹⁶⁵ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.30, q.5, (*Theol.* IV, 385); *Quodlibet*, VI, q.30, (*Theol.* IX, 699), Freddoso, 587.

because neither in the *Categories* nor in the *Metaphysics* is Aristotle concerned with semantics as such in connection with relations. Ockham's ontological (or deontological) preoccupations were not Aristotle's. Predication, signification, supposition and connotation all figure prominently in Ockham's account of relations, as they do in his scheme of ontological parsimony.

Just as a real relation involves no operation of the intellect, so a relation of reason is entirely dependent on one:

..when a thing is not, in the absence of an operation of the intellect, such as it is asserted to be by means of a relation or by means of the concrete [name] of a relation, then there is a relation of reason. For example, since nothing is a subject or a predicate in the absence of an operation of the intellect – indeed, in order for something to be a subject or a predicate an operation of the intellect is required – it follows that the relative concepts *subject* and *predicate* are called relations of reason.⁹⁶⁶

In one sense it might be said that all relations are relations of reason, since as Ockham has claimed, “‘relation’ is a name of second intention and... consequently, it does not signify things outside the soul. And so nothing outside the soul is in the genus of relation”.⁹⁶⁷ Only names or concepts are in the genus of relation. For this he adduces Aristotle's support:

Further, in the *Categories*,⁹⁶⁸ he claims that all relatives express complementarity if they are appropriately assigned. Given this, I argue: We do not assign anything except names, just as we do not use anything except names. Therefore, since, according to the Philosopher, we assign the relatives, it is the names themselves that are relatives.⁹⁶⁹

Where there are no appropriate names available to be assigned, Aristotle says, an appropriate name can be invented, expressing the complementarity of the correlatives. This is the principle involved in the relations of knowledge and the knowable (above, p.267), where the direct correlative of the knowable is

⁹⁶⁶ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, VI, q.30, (*Theol.* IX, 699), Freddoso, 587-8; *Ordinatio*, d.30, q.5, (*Theol.* IV, 385-386).

⁹⁶⁷ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, VI, q.23, (*Theol.* IX, 670), Freddoso, 565.

⁹⁶⁸ Aristotle, *Categories*, VII, (6b28, 36-37).

⁹⁶⁹ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, VI, q.22, (*Theol.* IX, 668), Freddoso, 563.

correctly assigned as knowledge, not the knower. Where a suitable name is lacking, Aristotle gives the example of 'rudder' and 'boat', where the word 'ruddered' has to be invented to be correctly assigned as the direct correlative of 'rudder'. Likewise with 'wing' and 'winged', 'head' and 'headed', etc., which are real relations.⁹⁷⁰

A relation of reason between a word and what it signifies is likewise dependent on the voluntary assignation of meaning to words by convention, whether now or in the past:

Likewise, since a spoken word does not signify a thing except by virtue of an institution, which is an operation of the intellect – so that if the spoken sound 'human being' had never been instituted by the intellect to signify anything, then it would neither signify anything nor be a significative spoken sound – it follows that the signification of this spoken sound can be called a relation of reason.⁹⁷¹

The same can be said of a coin and its value:

Likewise, since a coin has no value except by virtue of a voluntary institution, an act of the will preceded by an act of the intellect, it follows that the value can be called a relation of reason.⁹⁷²

Ockham: The *Imago Dei* and Relations of Origin

Ockham's doctrine of universals, and his associated doctrine of relations, which deny any reality whatever in universals or relations apart from absolute and singular things *extra animam*, seem to be on a collision course with the Church's doctrine of the divine persons of the Trinity, which identifies the persons as being constituted by relations of origin. But here, as is his usual

⁹⁷⁰ Aristotle, *Categories*, VII, (6b36-7a20).

⁹⁷¹ Ockham, *Quodlibet*, VI, q.30, (*Theol.* IV, 699), Freddoso, 588.

⁹⁷² Ockham, *Quodlibet*, VI, q.30, (*Theol.* IX, 699), Freddoso, 588.

practice, Ockham bows to “the authority of Holy Scripture”, and acknowledges that “it is unique to God and passes every understanding” that

Three things are numerically one thing, and therefore the numerically one thing is each of those three things, and yet the one of those three things is not the other...(and) that unique peculiarity should not be maintained except where the authority of Holy Scripture compels us to do so.⁹⁷³

Likewise, the “authority of the Saints” leads him to accept real relations in the Trinity:

Because the authorities of the Saints seem explicitly to posit relations in the Godhead – not merely that some relative concepts are truly predicated about the divine persons the way we say that Socrates is similar or that Socrates is father or son, but that there is there genuine real paternity and filiation, and that they are two simple things, one of which is not the other – therefore I hold with them that the divine persons are constituted and distinguished by relations of origin.⁹⁷⁴

This leaves to be investigated only the question of Ockham’s account of the image of the Trinity in the human soul, and whether and how he reconciles it with his dismissal of any real distinction between the soul and its faculties, and between the faculties themselves.

Ockham, as he does elsewhere, frequently cites Augustine in support of his account of the *imago Dei* in man. He likewise prefaces his description of the *imago* with one of what constitutes, not an image, but merely a trace (*vestigium*) of the Trinity in creation. Augustine’s account, like that of his scholastic successors, is based on Genesis 1:26, “Let us make man to Our own image and likeness”, and on St. Paul in Romans 1:20:

Ever since the creation of the world, the invisible existence of God and his everlasting power have been clearly seen by the mind’s understanding of created things.

⁹⁷³ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.2, q.6, (*Theol.* II, 175), Spade trans., *5 Texts*, 157.

⁹⁷⁴ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.26, q.1, (*Theol.* IV, 156-7), Adams trans., *Ockham*, Vol.2, 1006.

The *Imago* in Augustine, Aquinas and Bonaventure

The words 'image' and 'likeness' both feature in Genesis 1:26. Bonaventure reserved the likeness "only to those who are God-conformed"⁹⁷⁵ Thomas quotes Augustine: "Where an image exists, there forthwith is likeness; but where there is likeness there is not necessarily an image",⁹⁷⁶ and comments on this: "Hence it is clear that likeness is essential to an image; and that an image adds something to likeness – namely, that it is copied from something else".⁹⁷⁷ Further on, he compares likeness to the transcendentals, 'one', 'true' and 'good', likeness being "a kind of unity", and having both a general sense and sense to do with perfection:

..likeness may be considered in the light of a preamble to image, inasmuch as it is something more general than image... and, again, it may be considered as subsequent to image, inasmuch as it signifies a certain perfection of image. For we say that an image is like or unlike what it represents, according as the representation is perfect or imperfect.⁹⁷⁸

The true likeness of God is therefore found only in the Son of God, the perfect image of God. Mankind is therefore said to be made *to the image* (Gen.1:26), and not to be the image as such.⁹⁷⁹ Nor is equality implied by the word 'image':

Thomas says of equality,

Yet this is of the essence of a perfect image; for in a perfect image nothing is wanting that is to be found in that of which it is a copy. Now it is manifest that in man there is some likeness to God, copied from God as from an exemplar; yet this likeness is not one of equality, for such an exemplar infinitely excels its copy. Therefore there is in man a likeness to God; not indeed a perfect likeness, but imperfect.⁹⁸⁰

In the general sense of likeness, all creatures are like to God, merely because they exist, or because they both exist and live. Rational creatures alone are like God because they know or understand, therefore intellectual creatures alone

⁹⁷⁵ Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, II.12.1, (*Quar.V*, 230).

⁹⁷⁶ Augustine, QQ.83,q.74, (*PL*, 85-6).

⁹⁷⁷ Aquinas, *ST.Ia*.93.1c, (*Leo.V*, 401).

⁹⁷⁸ Aquinas, *ST.Ia*.93.9c, (*Leo.V*, 412).

⁹⁷⁹ Aquinas, *ST.Ia*.93.1.ad.2, (*Leo.V*, 401).

⁹⁸⁰ Aquinas, *ST.Ia*.93.1c, (*Leo.V*, 401).

are made to God's image.⁹⁸¹ Thomas designates three modes of imaging, all of which concern the acts of knowing and loving God:

Now the intellectual nature imitates God chiefly in this, that God understands and loves Himself. Wherefore we see that the image of God is in man in three ways. First, inasmuch as man possesses a natural aptitude for understanding and loving God; and this aptitude consists in the very nature of the mind, which is common to all men. Secondly, inasmuch as man actually or habitually knows and loves God, though imperfectly; and this image consists in the conformity of grace. Thirdly, inasmuch as man knows and loves God perfectly; and this image consists in the likeness of glory. Wherefore on the words, "The light of Thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us" (Ps.4:7), the gloss distinguishes a three-fold image, of *creation*, of *re-creation*, and of *likeness*. The first is found in all men, the second only in the just, the third only in the blessed.⁹⁸²

As with Bonaventure, the true 'likeness' is found in humans only as the most perfect image possible for man, which is *in statu patriae*.

The *imago* is in imitation of the divine nature, and therefore also of the tri-personal mode of relations of origin which accords with that nature:

..therefore to be to the image of God by imitation of the Divine Nature does not exclude being to the same image by the representation of the Divine Persons: but rather one follows from the other. We must, therefore, say that in man there exists the image of God, both as regards the Divine Nature and as regards the Trinity of Persons; for also in God Himself there is one nature in three Persons.⁹⁸³

The image, however, is not found in a trio of human persons, even in a family of father, mother and child.⁹⁸⁴ As a rational creature excels all other creatures only by the intellect or mind, so the image is in the mind only. An image represents something by likeness in species, whereas a trace does so only by way of an effect.⁹⁸⁵ In assigning the way the mind images the divine Persons, namely by acts, Thomas gives us something of a history of Augustine's thought on the

⁹⁸¹ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.93.2c*, (*Leo.V*,403).

⁹⁸² Aquinas, *ST.Ia.93.4c*, (*Leo.V*,404-5).

⁹⁸³ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.93.5c*, (*Leo.V*,406).

⁹⁸⁴ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.93.6.ad.2*, (*Leo.V*,407-8).

⁹⁸⁵ Aquinas, *ST.Ia.93.6c*, cf. *8c*, (*Leo.V*,407,411).

matter. Augustine had first identified the image as 'mind', 'knowledge' and 'love'.⁹⁸⁶ Thomas refers to this in answer to an objection:

Augustine observed this trinity first, as existing in the mind. But because the mind...in a way does not know itself... he takes [instead] three things in the soul which are proper to the mind, namely, memory, understanding, and will;...and assigns the image of the Trinity pre-eminently to these three, as though the first assignation were in part deficient.⁹⁸⁷

The development of Augustine's thought is completed by Thomas in the next question: he had finally identified the image in the acts of remembering, understanding and willing, and, moreover, with God as their object:

Augustine says: "The image of God exists in the mind, not because it has a remembrance of itself, loves itself, and understands itself; but because it can also remember, understand and love God by whom it was made".⁹⁸⁸ Much less, therefore, is the image of God in the soul in respect of other objects.⁹⁸⁹

"Thus the image of God is found in the soul according as the soul turns to God, or possesses a nature that enables it to turn to God".⁹⁹⁰ Thomas now develops the image in terms of the acts involved in the divine processions:

Now the Divine Persons are distinct from each other by reason of the procession of the Word from the Speaker, and the procession of Love connecting both. But in our soul word *cannot exist without actual thought*, as Augustine says.⁹⁹¹ Therefore, first and chiefly, the image of the Trinity is to be found in the acts of the soul, that is, inasmuch as from the knowledge which we possess, by actual thought we form an internal word; and thence break forth into love. But, since the principles and acts are the habits and powers, and everything exists virtually in its principle, therefore, secondarily and consequently, the image of the Trinity may be considered as existing in the powers, and still more in the habits, forasmuch as the acts virtually exist therein.⁹⁹²

Therefore for Thomas, the *imago Dei* in man consists primarily in the acts of understanding and willing, imaging the two processions in the Trinity, and secondarily in the faculties of intellect and will, or in their respective habits.

⁹⁸⁶ Augustine, *De Trinitate*, IX, 4, (PL, 42, 963-5).

⁹⁸⁷ Aquinas, *ST*, Ia. 93. 7. ad. 2, (Leo. V, 409), my parenthesis. .

⁹⁸⁸ Augustine, *De Trinitate*, XIV. 12, (PL, 42, 1048).

⁹⁸⁹ Aquinas, *ST*, Ia. 93. 8sc, (Leo. V, 410).

⁹⁹⁰ Aquinas, *ST*, Ia. 93. 8c, (Leo. V, 411).

⁹⁹¹ Augustine, *De Trinitate*, XIV. 7, (PL, 42, 1043).

⁹⁹² Aquinas, *ST*, Ia. 93. 7c, (Leo, V, 409).

Bonaventure, for his part, retains the Augustinian *imago* of memory, intellect and will, and their acts. His account reflects his view of the whole created cosmos as shot through with signs of its Trinitarian source. Each of these three mental faculties in turn reveals a further Trinitarian structure: *memory* “retains the *past* by recalling it, the *present* by receiving it, the *future* by foreseeing it”. It retains the *simple principles* (the point, the instant, the unit, etc.), the *eternal principles*, and the *axioms of the sciences*, “and retains them eternally”, always recalling them “as if it were recognizing them as innate and familiar”.⁹⁹³ The *intellect* is concerned with the meanings of *terms*, *propositions* and *inferences*,⁹⁹⁴ and the *will*, the power of choice, operates in *deliberation*, *judgment* and *desire*.⁹⁹⁵

The *Imago* in Scotus

Neither Scotus nor Ockham takes up Thomas’s version of the *imago*, based on the two processions in the Trinity and the acts of understanding and willing. Scotus bases his on Augustine, *De Trinitate*, XV. Edmund Hill, in his 1991 translation of the latter, makes this interesting comment on the fate suffered by Augustine’s account of the image of God in man:

Augustine does not discern an image of the Trinity in the three *faculties* of the soul, memory, understanding, and will. He scarcely speaks of faculties at all... This serious misunderstanding of Augustine’s thought is the responsibility of Peter Lombard,⁹⁹⁶ and is faithfully reproduced in what we can now happily call, I trust, the late Penny Catechism,⁹⁹⁷ in spite of the fact that it was explicitly corrected by Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa*.⁹⁹⁸ It is a serious misunderstanding, because it deprives the whole doctrine of the

⁹⁹³ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium*, III.2, (Quar.V, 303).

⁹⁹⁴ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium*, III.3, (Quar.V, 304).

⁹⁹⁵ Bonaventure, *Itinerarium*, III.4, (Quar.V, 304).

⁹⁹⁶ Lombard, *Sent.* I, d.3, c.2.

⁹⁹⁷ Hill then notes that the 1971 revised edition still retains the error, in questions 29 and 30.

⁹⁹⁸ Aquinas, *ST.* Ia.93.7.ad.3, (Leo.V, 409).

divine image in man of any effective application to the spiritual life of the Christian.⁹⁹⁹

Scotus and Ockham both avoid this pitfall, having, perhaps, taken account of Thomas's correction of Lombard. Augustine's *imago* is constituted by the *acts* of remembering, understanding and willing. Scotus also takes account of Augustine's final and definitive observation on the nature of the *imago*:

..it should be noted that the most perfect and ultimate understanding (*ratio*) of the image is when these things concur in the mind with respect to God as object, because then the soul not only has the express likeness...on the basis of those things within itself, but on the basis of them as conforming its acts to the object. It is therefore the true likeness of act to object.¹⁰⁰⁰

The soul is perfected in the image of God by the acts of remembering, understanding and willing God. Since Scotus accepts this, it may seem all the more odd that he sees no damage to human nature from the acts of forgetting, ignoring and disobeying God.¹⁰⁰¹ This reflects the separation he makes between nature, associated with necessity, and acts, which are from free will. It seems clear that Augustine does not make this separation between the act and the nature which has the capacity for the act, as he speaks of "this image, made by the Trinity and altered for the worse by its own fault".¹⁰⁰²

The *Imago* in Ockham.

In his question dealing with the *imago* in the rational creature, Ockham refers to a "common opinion" that the image consists in the *faculties* of intellect, memory and will, and not, at least principally, in secondary *acts*. He replies:

But this opinion is evidently not true, because there are no such three faculties, because as was shown in the second book (*Sent.* II, q. 20, as

⁹⁹⁹ Edmund Hill, trans., Introduction, *Saint Augustine. The Trinity*, NY, New City Press, 1991, 57.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Scotus, *Ordinatio*, I, d. 3, p. 3, q. 4, n. 590, (Vat. III, 349), my trans.: *notandum est quod perfectissima et ultima ratio imaginis est quando ista concurrunt in mente respectu Dei ut obiecti, quia tunc anima non tantum habet similitudinem expressivam...ex rationem eorum in se, sed ea ratione qua actus ipsi conformantur obiecto. Est enim actus vere similitudo obiecti..*

¹⁰⁰¹ See chapter 3, p. 203 above.

¹⁰⁰² Augustine, *De Trinitate*, XV. 22. 39, (PL. 42. 1088), Hill, trans., 426.

above, pp.245-6), there is no prior distinction in the substance of the soul itself before the distinction of production of secondary acts; therefore there are no such three representing the divine persons.¹⁰⁰³

Furthermore, he points out that between the divine Persons there is a real distinction, disqualifying any *imago* posited in faculties of the soul.

Nevertheless, the rational creature alone qualifies as image of God:

..because..truly and more eminently and thus properly God is wisdom, word, love, mercy, charity and so on, as if these were accidents in God, and these truly are [accidents] in the rational creature only, therefore the rational creature alone can in some way be called image of God, although not perfectly as if they were accidents in God as well as in the creature.¹⁰⁰⁴

He then addresses the question of how the image relates to the Trinity, and quotes Augustine regarding the soul being *capax Dei*: "The soul is that by which the image of God is capable of God and able to be a participant in God",¹⁰⁰⁵ thus making the connection between the image of God and participation in divine life. This is true of the soul according to its substance, therefore, in one way, "it is a true image according to its substance". In another way it is true of the soul according to its acts of understanding and willing, because without acts it cannot attain God and is not *capax Dei*. But "that by which the soul is *capax Dei* pertains to the perfect image, that is, to the perfection of the image".¹⁰⁰⁶ It is by the acts of understanding and of willing that the soul is *capax Dei*.

On this basis, Ockham gives his own account of the *imago*:

Therefore I say that the complete *ratio* of the image consists in the substance of the soul itself and in the two acts, namely the acts of

¹⁰⁰³ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.3, q.10, (*Theol.* II, 554-5): *Sed ista opinio non videtur esse vera, quia non sunt tales tres potentiae, quia sicut declarabitur in secundo, nulla est distinctio praevia in ipsa substantia animae ante distinctionem actuum secundorum productorum; igitur non sunt ibi talia tria quae repraesentent divinas personas.*

¹⁰⁰⁴ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.3, q.10, (*Theol.* II, 556-7): *..quia ita vere et eminentius et ita proprie Deus est sapientia, verbum, dilectio, misericordia, caritas, et sic de aliis sicut si ista essent accidentia in Deo, et ista vere sunt in creatura rationali sola, ideo creatura rationalis sola potest dici aliquo modo imago Dei, quamvis non ita perfecte sicut si essent accidentia tam in Deo quam in creatura.*

¹⁰⁰⁵ Augustine, *De Trinitate*, XIV, c.8, n.11, (*PL* 42, 1044).

¹⁰⁰⁶ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.3, q.10, (*Theol.* II, 558).

understanding and of willing, and can also consist in the substance of the soul itself and in two habits corresponding to those acts.¹⁰⁰⁷

He then gives his theological justification for this image:

And then speaking of natural acts, this is the order: just as the Father in the divinity has the fecundity for producing both the Son and the Holy Spirit and communicates to the Son the fecundity of producing the Holy Spirit, and Father and Son produce the Holy Spirit, so the substance of the soul itself is fecund and productive of both the act of understanding and the act of willing; and it produces first the act of understanding, which is also productive of the act of willing, and then those two causes, namely the substance of the soul itself and the act of understanding, can produce the act of willing, so that just as the Son in the divinity is only from one, and the Holy Spirit is from the Father producing and the Son produced, so the act of understanding is from the substance of the soul alone, and the act of willing is from the substance of the soul and from the act of understanding produced, and thus the image can in some way represent distinct persons, and the order and origin of them.¹⁰⁰⁸

I would conclude that, since Oneness in divinity is generally appropriated to the Father as *fons et origo totius deitatis*, and each of the Persons is co-equal with the whole essence of divinity, this explanation seems perfectly satisfactory and capable of obviating any danger of a Sabellian *imago* emerging. Ockham himself clearly envisages no such danger, as he does not include it among his subsequent list of six possible *dubia*.

This leaves only the element of God as the object of the acts making up the *imago* to be made explicit, in view of Augustine's conclusion that the image is rightly conceived in acts of remembering, knowing and loving God. Ockham deals with this in answer to the fifth and sixth *dubia*. To the fifth he replies that

¹⁰⁰⁷ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.3, q.10, (*Theol.* II, 558-9): *Ideo dico quod completa ratio imaginis consistit in ipsa substantia animae et duobus actibus, scilicet actu intelligendi et volendi, et etiam potest consistere in ipsa substantia animae et in duobus habitibus correspondentibus ipsis actibus.*

¹⁰⁰⁸ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.3, q.10, (*Theol.* II, 559): *Et tunc loquendo de actibus naturalibus, iste est ordo: quod sicut Pater in divinis habet fecunditatem ad producendum tam Filium quam Spiritum Sanctum et communicat Filio fecunditatem producendi Spiritum Sanctum, et Pater et Filius producunt Spiritum Sanctum, ita ipsa substantia animae est fecunda et productiva tam actus intelligendi quam volendi; et producit primo actum intelligendi, qui est etiam productivus actus volendi, et tunc illae duae causae, scilicet ipsa substantia animae et actus intelligendi possunt producere actum volendi, ita quod sicut Filius in divinis est tantum ab uno, et Spiritus Sanctus est a Patre producente et a Filio producto, ita actus intelligendi est a sola substantia animae, et actus volendi est a substantia animae, et ab actu intelligendi producto, et sic imago potest aliquo modo repraesentare distinctas personas, et ordinem et originem earum.*

The image is most properly [conceived] with respect to God as object, because those acts of knowing and willing are similitudes of God... and therefore blessed Augustine places the Trinitarian image in that which is related to eternal things.¹⁰⁰⁹

Likewise, to the sixth *dubium*, Ockham replies that there is no image in the sensitive part “because it has no act with respect to God”.

On this issue, Ockham’s semantic account of the soul and its acts seems, after all, to accord well with a satisfactory version of the *imago Dei* in the rational creature. However, he does not address the distinction between “image” and “likeness” (*similitudo*). More seriously, in my opinion, an important element is missing from his account of the soul’s capacity to image God (though not from the image itself): to be *capax Dei* is not only to be capable of acting; in Augustine’s and Thomas’s view, it is, firstly and above all, to be capable of receiving.¹⁰¹⁰ The divine relations of origin are not only active: they have a passive, receptive, aspect as well.

Conclusion to Chapter 4

We have seen (p.248) that, for Thomas, ‘relation’ is the metaphysical *locus* of the soul’s participation in divine goodness. It is, in fact, the category most closely involved, after ‘substance’, in circumincession, the intra-divine life of the Trinity, in which being is eternally both given and received, and relation is not merely an accident. Reality in divine relations differs from the essence only in what is meant by ‘opposition to a term’, therefore it differs from the essence only in mode of intelligibility (p.251-2). Between creatures and God (p.249), real

¹⁰⁰⁹ Ockham, *Ordinatio*, d.3, q.10, (*Theol.* II, 568): *...quod imago est propriissime respectu Dei ut obiecti, quia illi actus cognoscendi et volendi sunt similitudines Dei... Et ideo ponit beatus Augustinus imaginem trinitatem illam quae est respectu aeternorum.*

¹⁰¹⁰ See Fergus Kerr quotation and comment about a “theologically fateful semantic shift”, chapter 1, p.29 above.

relation coincides with the reality of dependence, in which creatures are ordered to God, but not vice-versa. Thomas's concept of the kind of reality involved in the intra-divine relations does not allow him to attribute a 'real' relation of God to creatures, due to the contingency of the act of creation (p.251). Mutual real relations exist only where there is mutuality of dependence; however, Thomas admits the possibility of many logical relations in God to creatures (p.265). For Thomas, as well as Bonaventure, real relation in creatures is an aspect of finality, as it pertains to the natural order: it is an order of thing to thing, whereas a logical relation, such as genus and species, is an order of thought to thought. On the other hand, relation is unique among Aristotle's categories in having a different kind of being, which does not adhere in any subject (p.248-9), and is only 'conceptual' where no dependence is involved.

Scotus's metaphysics do not allow for the existence of merely conceptual relations: all are encompassed under the three modes of real relations he takes from Aristotle (above, p.260). His account of relation, combined with formal distinction, accords well with real relations of origin in the Trinity (p.255). All relations are "distinct from absolute things", but inhere in their foundations, from which they are nevertheless distinct. All that is required are real termini, really distinct, and which are there "by the nature of things" (p.252). Scotus rejects as invalid Thomas's identification of reality in relations, and mutuality, with dependence, and admits God's relation to creatures as a real third-mode co-relation (p.254), not merely 'of reason', and not merely temporal either (p.265). The relation of creatures to God is both new and temporal.

Relation is one of the eight universal categories to which Ockham denies any extra-mental reality whatever. For Ockham, a relation is *called* real because it *signifies* absolute things (p.258). It is not distinct from absolute things, neither does it inhere in them, nor is it identical with them. A real relation exists when relative *names* are assigned to denominate absolute things, outside or inside the soul, which would still be as they are without any act of a created intellect assigning names. The relatives are *names*, which signify one absolute thing and connote another. A relation 'of reason' exists when an act of an intellect is required, for example with the relation between a coin and its conventionally-assigned value (p.270). Relations do not have 'foundations'; Ockham speaks only of 'extremes' or 'termini'. Likewise, mutuality in relations does not involve dependence, but only "appropriate assignment" of relative names (p.266-7).

On this basis, Ockham can call both the relations of creatures to God and the relation of God to creatures real relations. No created intellect has established them as they are (p.267). Yet we have moved a long way from Thomas's, Bonaventure's, and Scotus's, concern for relational reality based "in the nature of things" themselves, independently of any assignment of names. A real epistemological "shift to the thinking subject" has taken place. If there is any area in which Ockham is rightly called a nominalist, rather than a conceptualist, it must surely be here.

Nevertheless, in his account of the *imago Dei*, Ockham's adherence to the authority of "the Saints and Doctors" has served him well. His *imago* is not only orthodox, but adopts elements from both Thomas's and Scotus's which make it a valid variant, if not actually a development, of theirs. It is orthodox, in fact.

precisely because it incorporates the 'passive relations of origin', and therefore the "receptivity at the heart of being" that I have referred to elsewhere.

Conclusion

Ockham's account of human nature, as it turns out, owes rather less to his nominalism than to his concern for human and divine freedom-of-indifference. However, this in itself is greatly facilitated by his radical singularism, combined with his doctrine of the *potentia absoluta Dei*. In addition, some of the outcomes with which I have been concerned are the results of his 'principle of parsimony' ('razor').

Ockham is clearly an inheritor of the view, of which Scotus is a major exponent, which sees the operations of nature, as such, as radically incommensurable with the operations of free will in human beings. The resulting dismissal of natural finality in human nature has considerable implications for human self-understanding, as de Lubac (p.30), Pinckaers (pp.92-3) and Kerr (pp.29-30) have pointed out. The aspect I dwell on here (below), is that of 'receptivity' to divine grace.

Aquinas's essence/being distinction in creatures provides not only a way of distinguishing divine and human modes of being, the one as *Ipsum Esse*, the other as *esse participatum*; it also provides a metaphysical basis and context for the on-going project of a creature's "seeking its perfection and the fulness of its being" in the course of its life. Once the distinction in mode of being is rejected, a certain perspective on life, especially human life, must disappear with it. Potency or potentiality implies receptivity, since what is potential cannot actualise itself; actuality has to be received. In chapter 1 (p.23), I noted that "within the tri-personal divine life (circumincession) of the Godhead, being is

both given and received.¹⁰¹¹ The dignity of receptivity therefore exists at the very heart of being". In chapter 2 (p.87, note 315), I quoted from von Balthasar on *Existence as Receptivity*, and his description of Christ's reception, openly acknowledged, of all that he is, all that he says and does, from the Father: a receptivity that in no way threatens or diminishes the receiver's freedom, but which, like the action of grace, actually constitutes it. In chapter 1 (p.29) I also cited Fergus Kerr on human nature's 'long lost' and misunderstood attribute of *capacitas Dei*, which as originally understood was a purely passive principle of receptivity of the supernatural, by which the image of God in the soul is formed and perfected.

On this score, it would hardly be fair to Ockham to issue a final verdict on the strength of what is *not* found in his works. What can be said is that there *appears* to be a considerable diminishment in what I would call "awareness of the dimension of receptivity, or passivity", where grace is concerned. Indicative factors may be the absence of any treatment of the beatitudes and fruits of the Holy Spirit, and his account of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which confines itself to asking whether they are strictly necessary, since, according to him, the same functions are possible for unaided human nature, and to wondering what their purpose might be (ch.3, p.232). Parallel to this is the minimal efficacy he ascribes to the infused virtues, on the grounds that each of their acts "is of the same *ratio* as an act possible to our purely natural powers". In addition, there is Ockham's dismissal of the agent intellect (p.242), regarded by the other three scholars examined as mediator of divine illumination to the passive intellect, and the absence of any mention of divine illumination, as such, from the rest of

¹⁰¹¹ E.g., Aquinas, *ST.Ia.33.3.ad.2*; *SCG.IV,26.12*.

Ockham's *opus*. I have also pointed out Ockham's renunciation, as superfluous (pp.229-30), of the traditional terms for grace which describe the different actions of God in the soul: *gratia sanans*, *gratia elevans* etc., and, most significantly, *gratia co-operans* (see Kerr quote, ch.1,p.19). If it turns out that none of these things is seen by Ockham as indicative of an openness or receptivity to the supernatural which is intrinsic to human nature, and cannot lightly be ignored or dismissed, then it can be said that he represents a major turning point in the understanding of human nature. All of these points, however, would bear further investigation.

What scarcely needs further investigation, as it has received, and continues to receive, so much scholarly attention, is the contribution of Ockham's nominalism to a "shift to the human subject" in epistemology, whether or not it is rightly called "nominalism" or "conceptualism". His account of 'relation' (chapter 4) is perhaps the most striking example.

His frequent use of qualifying expressions such as "If I accepted no authority", or "because the Saints say so", or "*non potest demonstrari*" suggests that Ockham may have made a significant contribution to the separation between faith and reason which developed after his time. This would certainly call for much more research.

It has not been possible to include an investigation of Ockham's Christology, even though the question whether his account of "nature" in relation to the universal might have implications for the "consubstantiality" of the Chalcedon formula would seem to be worth investigating. However, I was surprised to find

that Aquinas, too, attributes no reality at all, *extra animam*, to nature as universal, and refers to the community of Redemption as a “community of cause” rather than a community of nature (p.39). Scotus’s, “common nature” seems at first sight to fulfil the requirements for “consubstantiality” far more readily than Aquinas’s account. But, on closer inspection, its relationship to reality *extra animam* is just as tenuous as Thomas’s: Scotus says that it can be called a universal only as considered absolutely, abstracted from all reality, and in the sense that “an identical name can be given to each *suppositum*” (p.59). In fact, elements of Ockham’s “nominalism” can be found latent in this way in both Aquinas and Scotus.

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